MAY 31 1917

June

The Black Cat

1917

Clever Short Stories

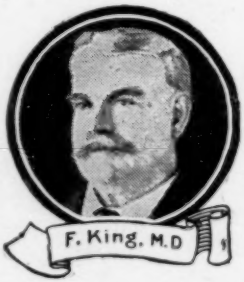
City Physicians Explain Why They Prescribe Nuxated Iron to Make Beautiful, Healthy Women and Strong, Vigorous Men

NOW BEING USED BY OVER THREE MILLION PEOPLE ANNUALLY

Quickly transforms the flabby flesh, toneless tissues, and pallid cheeks of weak, anaemic men and women into a perfect glow of health and beauty — Often increases the strength of delicate, nervous, run-down folks 100 per cent. in two weeks' time.

IT is conservatively estimated that over three million people annually in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters received are given below:

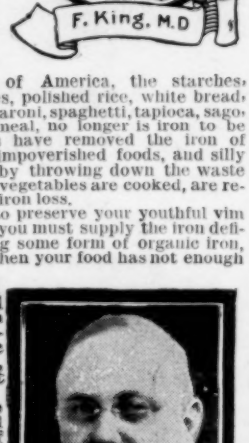


Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, says: "There can be no vigorous iron men, without iron."

Pallor means anemia.

Anemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anemic men and women is pale, the flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent, and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks. In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated corn-meal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked, are responsible for another grave iron loss.

"Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe old age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt."



Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician, who has studied both in this country and in great European Medical Institutions, says: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders.

"If people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or run-down, instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages I am convinced that in this way they could ward off disease, preventing it becoming organic in thousands of cases and thereby the lives of thousands might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, kidney, liver, heart trouble and other dangerous maladies. The real and true cause which started their disease was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood.

"Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with a blood pressure of a boy of twenty and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron — Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At thirty he was in bad health; at forty-six he was care worn and nearly all in. Now, at fifty, after taking Nuxated Iron, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth.

"Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron.

"If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, visiting surgeon, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE — Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in nuxated iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron, and increase their strength 100 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

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The Black Cat

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THE BLACK CAT CLUB

BACK in November, when the editor penned the salutatory of the club, he said that it was created to bring about certain more or less "ideal" relations between editor and readers. Not much was said about writers. Perhaps it was presumed that they would be interested in the $25 bonus to the exclusion of all else. Perhaps the editor was thinking about what Stephen Leacock called "the low cunning of an author," and shaking his head sadly over the mercenary instincts of authors who not only want their stories published but actually demand payment for the privilege. Nothing was said about writers in that salutatory and little was said in the full page advertisement that followed. Yet a distinct result of the club plan has been the interest which it has aroused among young writers. Many of our criticisms have come from them, for they have found that writers who are still concerned with fundamentals can find nothing better in the way of "finger exercises" than analyzing *Black Cat* stories. One of them goes so far as to say that the *Black Cat* is giving a course that is more helpful to the young writer than any correspondence course.

The returns in the March contest resulted in the awarding of the $25 prize to Marion Hill, author of *The Bridegroom Elect.* A criticism of this and other stories follows. The stories are arranged in the order of their standing in the contest.

In *The Bridegroom Elect*, Marion Hill has written a story full of clever phrases and pleasant humor. The characters are drawn with the strength and lightness of touch of an artist. There is a nice sense of proportion in the balancing of the brothers against each other and in the juxtaposition of Bianca and the ninety-eight cent girls. The crisis is alive with action, the climax and conclusion are excellent. Of the eight stories in the number, this one is the best combination of substance and form, although *The Power of the Wireless* and *Their Piece of Art* exceed it in dramatic possibilities.

The Power of the Wireless is a story that is rich in material but poor in treatment, a story that is less individual than some of the others principally because it is so conformative to previous literary types. The ruthlessness with which the author permits all on board the "Starlight" to be killed is justified by his premises. He set out apparantly to paint a sombre picture of the sea and he does not let his sentiments run away with his artistic instincts. His theme is the wireless, its power for good or ill; and to the very end he is consistent. But the virtues of the story stop there. In neither technique nor style does the author achieve a high standard. He has some vague conception of a wireless station, but it is doubtful if he has ever seen one in operation. Even Marconi has never been able to make a message being received "echo raucously." And why, if the German admiral could hear the concussion when the "Starlight" was blown up, couldn't he have caught the wireless messages? The atmosphere of mystery in which the story is shrouded from the first paragraph soon thickens to a murky obscurity, pierced occasionally by brilliant flashes of frenzied rhetoric. 'Tis a dreadful night. Heavy lines of capital letters plow their way through the pathless deeps, steering their devious ways "by the war-star Mars" and injuring a style that is already commonplace. Surely the author has not made the most of his material. He might have molded it into more artistic form.

Shad's Windfall is a pretty picture of a bit of life among the "submerged tenth." It is a type of "made" story; it is woven about a single verse of the Bible, a verse which the dominant character knows by heart and of which he says, "It's into the Bible just that way, and nothing that's into the Bible is junk." The interviewing-the-world idea, while not strictly fresh in this story, is used to good advantage; and the author succeeds in sustaining a humorous situation with clever dialogue. It is a whimsical bit of narration, a transcript from life, worked out with careful attention to detail and sustained interest.

Their Piece of Art is a mystery story that does not expend the full force of its emo-

(*Continued on Page* 45.)

NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

BY FREDERICK J. JACKSON

Five men who wish to reach a state of affluence with a minimum of effort satisfy their desire by robbing a mission. Four of them have no god but gold. The fifth for the first time in years is aware of a higher divinity.

HERE'S something about the idea that makes me uneasy. I don't like it! Ever been in a church? Ever pray?"

The face of Peel, the beachcomber, crinkled like tanned leather as he laughed derisively, laughed as when he had escaped the firing squad in Callao and crossed the Pacific to the Philippines.

"Me in a church? *Me* pray? If ever I pray it'll be for a stack of gold. The yellow god is all I'll ever look up to! Say," he demanded, suspiciously, "you ain't thinkin' of backin' out, are you? 'Cause you can't, see! You've got to figure this out for us!"

Miller, feverish and wan, looked at Peel. "Oh, no, I'm not backing out," he said, resignedly.

"You'd be crazy!" Peel declared. "I told you about the galleon that brought the treasure to the Philippines, didn't I? Those cups and vessels of soft, pure gold the monks used in services. Stole 'em, the Spaniards did! And they squealed like stuck pigs when the French and British buccaneers stole 'em in turn!"

"Aw, that was some hundred years ago."

"What of it? The missions here have the gold yet, and that old paper I found in Callao tells all about the secret hiding place."

Peel, Miller and three others sat beneath a mango tree on the edge of the jungle. A whaleboat was beached fifty yards away, while spread out before them was the Sulu sea, a sheet of red and gold flame in the setting sun.

Said Miller: "I think we'd better start now."

With Peel and Miller still mumbling over the plans, they shoved the boat off the beach and set out, as though fleeing from the darkness which crept out from land with tropical haste. Through the early evening the oarsmen pulled along quietly, keeping a course parallel to the shore line where the little ripples of the quiet sea lapped with an ever-changing fringe of phosphorous. Occasionally, a ground-swell swept in, lifted the boat, dropped it again, and passed on to break with a roar and a line of fire along the shingle.

The dark wall of mangroves and jungle broke off, and gave way to an occasional palm hut and to cultivated fields. A little later the men in the boat could make out the indistinct outlines of what they knew to be the mud walls around the Mission of Santa Marta.

Vaguely, a chapel and cloister loomed up on the hill in the tropical starlight, the whitewashed towers of the bells rising higher like twin sentinels, and standing wraithlike against the skyline.

Miller peered ahead, and finally headed the boat t wards the beach. "In with the oars!" was his hushed order.

It was quietly obeyed. The keel grated on the sand. The men sprang out, seized the gunwhales, and with the aid of a breaking swell, hauled the boat out of water.

Stealthily, they made their way towards the mission, dark and silent as a place of the dead. Peel scaled the outer gates, and opened them from within. They groped through the patio to the chapel under the bell-towers. The door opened to Miller's touch and they entered. Peel

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struck a match and lighted a bull's-eye lantern.

Down an aisle, past row upon row of straight-backed seats, he led them directly towards the altar, grinning as he noticed the furtive glances from his men as they scanned the empty seats. The beachcomber flashed his light around, and then reached up to a figure of the Virgin as if to pull it down.

Miller choked on a word of protest at the vandalism.

"I know what I'm doin'!" said Peel. The entire altar swung back.

"Now— Here's where they keep it, boys!" There was nervous exultation in his tone as he stepped into a narrow chamber. They crowded in.

Kranz, slow-thinking and of few words, licked his lips at the sight of the reward. Jones, a big Cockney, and Harris, the mulatto, crouched side by side, their eyes shining hungrily.

There was no delay. Miller and Peel began packing the gleaming objects into a chest. Suddenly they straightened. In the unnatural quiet, sandalled feet could be heard shuffling across the patio.

A monk entered the chapel. Down the aisle he hurried, carrying a flare high over his head to light his way. As the group at the altar came into the light, the hand of the brother trembled.

"Hold! What is this?" He saw the altar swung back and the treasure exposed. "Ye desecrators of that which is holy; ye profaners of that which is pure! My children, *think*, for ye know not what ye do!"

An oath ripped from Peel. A bolt of fire flashed in the dull half-light. The explosion was deafening in the narrow confines. It echoed and re-echoed among the rafters.

"Oh, my God! What have you done?" gasped Miller, dropping to the side of the fallen monk.

"Come on, you fool!" Peel was in command now. He led the exit from the chapel, staggering along with his men under the weight of the chest.

"Poor fool! Poor blind fool!" Miller sobbed. "He doesn't know what he's done!" He knelt over the monk again.

"Thank the Lord he's not dead!" For a moment he hesitated, then crossed himself fervently, the first time in years, and followed through the doors into the patio.

The following moments were only a nightmare to Miller. He found himself outside the mud walls, covering the retreat of the men. Shot after shot he fired over the heads of the scantily-clad people in the gateway to prevent pursuit. Sobbing and cursing wildly, he ran to the beach. Then he was in the boat, crouching in the stern as he steered for open water, while four husky backs strained at the oars.

Patches of phosphorescent fire swirled, and boiled, and sucked, and made miniature whirlpools behind each ashen blade as it bent and bit sharply through the water. Astern, the narrow wake of the whaleboat was a ribbon of living fire, glowing fitfully.

A bullet whined sharply overhead. Another ricochetted from the water a dozen feet away, and hummed off into the distance. The tip of an oar was splintered by a shot. Bullets whizzed by on all sides, then the boat drew out of range.

"We made such a hell of a fuss, the garrison from the fort almost nipped us," laughed Peel, looking back at the futile flashes.

"Huh. All they see's our wake," replied Miller, as he changed the course of the boat.

"How's she headin'?" inquired Peel, with a glance at the stars.

"East by south!"

"That's about right!"

On they rowed through the night. Miller leaned over the compass and watched it in the light of the bull's-eye.

There was no moon. An overhead haze gradually obscured the sky. The southern cross disappeared. The night became inky-black, a tropical night, with a velvety, all-enveloping darkness.

Furtively Miller began shifting the course of the whaleboat. The oarsmen failed to notice that the swells were coming from ahead now, instead of from abeam; and the boat was soon heading off

at right angles to the course it originally held.

So they passed the night. At intervals two of the rowers alternated to rest their tired muscles. This was but very seldom, however, for they were spurred on by fear of what lay behind them, that, and the thought of lustful pleasure ahead. As they rowed, they talked spasmodically, made plans for the future, and of how each would dispose of his share.

"I tell you, boys, we'd better scatter for awhile," concluded Peel; "we've sure stirred up one hell of a mess. When we get to Miradora I'm goin' to make my way around to Manila in a sampan. That's inconspicuous enough, if a fellow is alone. I know a Chink who'll melt my share of the gold cups and crosses and things into little bars. That'll destroy all evidence. Takin' no chances, I ain't!"

"Goot idea!" commended Kranz.

"Not for me!" declared the stroke oar, the big Cockney. "Hi knows w'ere Hi can get the top price in 'Ong Kong."

"Singapore for this bird!" announced the next oar, Harris, the mulatto. Harris was over six feet, a brute in every way. He was a deserter from a United States gunboat on the China station.

On and on they planned doubtful pleasures and amusements, but they did not look into the eyes of the man who sat crouched in the stern, nor see the set of his lips as he listened to their plans and all the time held the boat steadily to the northward.

Morning came. The oriental sun popped gorgeously above the horizon, and rapidly dispersed the overhead mist.

Jones arose to his feet, apparently much puzzled. Instead of the green islands expected, he saw nothing but the flat, oily expanse of water, broken only by an occasional sluggish swell which came sweeping down from the north.

"Hi carn't hunderstand this," he announced. "There hought to be land by the blooming boat right now. Crikey! Look where the sun is! Bly me, hif we hyn't been 'eadin' north!" His eyes grew chilly with sudden suspicion. He looked at Miller, who glared defiantly.

Jones hauled in his oar and started aft. "Lemme see that compass!" he demanded. Then he leaped back. Instead of looking at the compass, he found himself staring into the ugly snout of a huge navy revolver. He could see the hammer drawn back under Miller's thumb. Half in bewilderment, Jones sank back on the seat.

"Wot the 'ell, Bill?" he wondered.

Peel started to arise at the sight of the revolver. Dazed, he sat down mechanically as Miller turned the muzzle in his direction.

"Got the drop on you!" Miller snapped out. "Bat an eye wrong, or move a hand, any one of you, and your prayers are said! You know how I shoot! Now, Jones, unbuckle your belt. Easy! Don't put your hooks on that gun! Now—drop it over the side!"

Sullenly, Jones obeyed. The others looked on in sheer amazement. Little bubbles arose playfully to the surface as the .45 and the belt of shells sank into the blue depths.

"Now, Harris, the same!" and the mulatto's gun went overboard. Peel and Kranz were likewise disarmed, and Miller settled back to the tiller.

"Now, row, you dogs, row!" he ordered.

A strange contrast was Miller as he held the four oarsmen in subjection with his revolver. Pale, a hectic flush on his cheeks, thin to the point of emaciation, he was a sick man. A man less iron-willed than he would have been prostrate. His eyes were glowing a bit too brightly after the sleepless nights, and the flush burned deeper than the evening before.

Primitive types all, any of the men could have crushed him. But they were cowed. They stood in deadly fear of him. Had they not seen him shoot? He had shot every pip from the six of spades from a distance at which any of them would probably have missed the card. He had outshot and killed "Pig-eyed" Scanlon in Hong Kong, Scanlon who was known as a gunfighter from Singapore to Seoul. Miller's reputation was based on that feat. Then, too, he had a phenomenal brain. It was for this that Peel had enrolled him in the party.

They could imagine no motive for Miller's present tactics other than his love of gold. They knew only that he had betrayed them. By their code he deserved no mercy. Any one of the four cheerfully would have throttled Miller and flung him into the sea.

While inwardly cursing him, their gaze was riveted in fascination on the chest where he sat. This was of oak, worm-eaten, bound and studded heavily with brass, which was nearly eaten off by the verdigris of two or three centuries. Two rotted leather straps had fallen from around the chest. A dead sort of thing!

"You dirty sneak!" swore Peel, glaring at Miller. "We oughta known better than trust you. You weren't one of us!"

"No compliments, *Mister* Peel, if you please," returned Miller. "Save your breath! You'll need it before we reach San Miguel."

"San Miguel!" gasped Peel. "You're crazy! Don't you know that San Miguel is over a hundred and fifty miles from Santa Marta?"

"Sure, I know," acknowledged Miller, "and you better pass that water-breaker aft. You fellows hit it up too freely last night. We'll need it later."

"San Miguel!" repeated Harris. Then he fairly foamed at the mouth and directed a stream of abuse at Miller.

"That will do, Harris! You keep your fly-trap closed mighty tight, sing low, and put a little muscle behind that oar, or I might *accidently* overlook you a couple of times when I pass out this water."

Harris subsided, but his dark, sullen eyes, with their dissipated, yellowed whites, glowed with bitter hatred. A little later the mulatto broke out again.

"Harris," said Miller, slowly, "to tell the truth, I'd just as soon shoot you as look at you, and I'm looking right at you. I may have broken all the ten commandments, but there are things which even *I* draw the line on, and I have as much use for a depraved beast like you as I have for a cobra."

Miller distributed food to the men. He sat munching on a cake of sea-biscuit, when he suddenly choked on a piece. He coughed violently a few times, then still harder, doubling up with pain. His face became congested, he was strangling.

Like a tiger ready to spring, Harris had been watching. As Miller lowered his head, Harris dropped his oar, and dashed at the sick man. The oar of Jones, the stroke, was in Harris's path. He lost a fraction of a second in hurdling over it. Two more steps and he would have reached Miller. That lost fraction of a second was fatal. Miller raised his head and saw.

Coldly, calmly, dispassionately, almost disinterestedly it seemed, he lifted the gun and shot Harris through the heart. The mulatto straightened erect at the smash of the bullet. The evil in his eyes turned to the surprised look of a child, then he collapsed across the Cockney's seat.

Miller's lips twisted into a sort of grim smile as he saw Jones rise to join Harris. The gun barked again. Jones screamed as a bullet smashed his ribs. A third shot, and he fell sprawling over the body of the mulatto.

Miller peered questioningly at Peel and Kranz, who had remained at their oars in the fore part of the boat. Then he resumed his racking cough until he found relief. Weak and trembling, he leaned back against the gunwale.

Finally he recovered a bit. "In with your oars, and drop that carrion overboard!" He pointed to the bodies with the muzzle of the gun.

Harris's oar had stuck in the tholepins. Peel bumped against it, and the oar slid overboard through the pins. The beachcomber caught at it.

"Let it go along with Kranz's oar," ordered Miller. "You'll need only two. Now get back and plant some beef behind the ash."

The patches of blood on the after thwart dried quickly. In the heat of the fiery overhead sun they turned into blackened spots, which afterwards cracked into various designs. They fascinated Kranz. In pop-eyed horror he watched them through the afternoon.

It was Peel who spoke after hours of grilling work.

"My God, Miller!" he expostulated, dashing the sweat from his face, "you don't mean to say that you're keepin' on to San Miguel. That's nearly one hundred miles away, and the two of us couldn't row there in less than three days. We're not machines! This boat is too heavy for a single pair of oars. I'm about all in now!"

"We're going to San Miguel," declared Miller. He raised the revolver menacingly, meaningly.

"What's the great idea?" insisted Peel. "You can't get rid of the stuff there!"

Miller was silent for a moment. Emotions, many and varied, played on his thin countenance.

"These relics are going back to the church," he said at last. "Let me tell you something: I was brought up in the church when I was young, but I forgot its teachings. I was not impressed. I laughed at everything. I drifted low, very low. I have commanded a bloody pirate junk down on the south coast. Men have tried to kill me, many of them," he shrugged his thin shoulders and sighed self-appraisingly, "and I laughed as I killed *them* instead!"

"Harris, for example," interjected Peel grimly, "only you didn't laugh then!"

"This fever has been wasting me for weeks. The thought of death caused me no concern until last night. It was your wanton shooting of that monk that served to awaken me. It came to me that I may have but a short time to live, and that I must make my peace with God the best I can before I go. There is little I can do —return these sacred chalices to the church where they have been for centuries is all perhaps.

"I want to get them to San Miguel, where the Bishop is, and seek absolution from him. To have that curse lifted. *'May these sacrilegists never know Ghristian burial!'* is what the nun screamed. That bothers me, Peel; it troubles me!" He paused, and breathed heavily from exhaustion.

"Aw, you and your curses make me sick," jeered Peel. "What difference does Christian burial make? When you're dead, you're dead, and that's all there is to it. I know! 'Live while you can,' is my motto. A big chance you've got of gettin' to San Miguel, you and your notions. In a day or two where'll you be for lack of sleep? Why, you ain't got a chance! You ain't strong enough to tie a knot that would hold us!"

"Perhaps," said Miller, setting his jaw stubbornly, "but you chuck a little weight on that oar and we'll arrive sooner, for we are going to San Miguel."

A long, slate-gray shadow crept silently alongside the boat from astern.

"Christian burial!" drawled Peel with a sneer. "That tiger-shark is all the Christian burial you'll be getting. When you insist on headin' for San Miguel, you're only bitin' off a man-sized chunk that'll choke yuh. We'll be gettin' all the junk, 'stead of havin' to split with you."

"Ye-es?" said Miller. "I'll tell you this, Peel: if I can't hold out until we reach San Miguel, I'll at least see that it ain't left for you to trade for rotten pleasures. They're too sacred to be touched by your dirty hands."

Peel smiled sardonically, and well he might. Four strong men had staggered and sweated under the weight of the chest in bringing it to the beach. Two of them could scarcely lift it between them. The chest was safe now in the bottom of the boat, for Miller could never budge it, Peel reasoned.

Throughout the day the two oarsmen labored, working their hearts out under the menace of Miller's gun, and the terrible threat of no water if they soldiered on the job. At intervals of rest Miller doled water out to them, a gill at a time. In the late afternoon they slept, for Peel had fallen from his seat in a stupor caused by shear weariness.

And ever silently following them was the shark, eighteen hungry feet of ominous, grim expectancy, for the best meal in many a day had come from this boat.

Miller watched it dreamily, half in horror. A little, blue-striped pilot fish darted up to the head of the shark as though delivering a message. He shuddered.

Peel's callous words rang in his ears:

"That tiger-shark is all the Christian burial you'll be gettin'!" Miller shivered again, then caught himself with a start. "Must be losing my nerve," he thought. The possibility threw a fright into him. One thought obsessed him. He awakened the sleepers, and with threats and curses drove them at the oars through the night, drove them to the limit of their endurance.

By early morning Miller was delirious. He raved of his boyhood home. An uncle had been a parish priest. The church had grown to be a nightmare to the lad of wild instincts. In his delirium he made attempts at repeating the Lord's prayer, but he had forgotten it. He essayed the ten commandments, but did little better. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," was the part he repeated over and over again, and he appeared to be speaking to Peel.

Peel watched him keenly, debating with himself as to whether or not Miller still retained sufficient of his faculties to shoot should he attempt to rush him.

Miller's ravings at last began to irritate Peel. "Belay that guff, Miller!" he burst out. "You'll be singing a hymn next!"

Miller recovered himself with a start. "And if I do, you'll have to join in the chorus!" he retorted.

The monotonous thump of the oars in the tholepins seemed to want to lull him into disastrous slumber. Every nerve in his tortured body craved rest. His eyelids seemed weighted. Twice, he dozed momentarily in spite of himself, but awakened each time at the jerk of his head as it fell forward on his chest. He bathed his face and eyes in sea-water, and the sting of the salt on his drawn skin afforded a scant relief. It was short at best, and after each repetition it grew still shorter, and the desire for sleep came back threefold.

He managed to stand erect, and gazed around toward the horizon. Nothing was to be seen but the gently heaving surface of the blue-black sea with its glassy swells that reflected the horrible glare in a manner that hurt his tired and burning eyes. Fifty miles they were from land, and as much more from the nearest steamer lane.

He sat down heavily upon the chest, and for a brief period grew light-headed and babbled incoherently. Peel and Kranz had again slumped into the bottom of the boat. They slept audibly, with their heads in the scant shade of the seats.

Miller looked at them absently for a while, then his gaze wandered to the bow of the boat. It fell on the painter, neatly coiled, six fathoms of stout three-inch Manila line.

"Huh!" he muttered with a sour grin. "And Peel said that I couldn't tie him. Damned if he didn't bluff me!"

Reeling and staggering giddily, he made his way to the bow, climbing over the seats and avoiding the sleepers. With the painter in one hand, he prodded Kranz with the revolver barrel.

"Sit up!" he ordered quietly. "No, sit in the bottom with your shoulders against the thwart."

It was an ingenious method Miller had devised. He led the line over the seat, under Kranz's chin, and back over the seat. Then he ran it under the seat, tight around Kranz's chest, beneath his arms, and back under the seat again.

He did this all from behind, with the revolver ever handy, to obviate any chance of Kranz's grappling with him. He shoved the revolver muzzle against Kranz's head.

"Off with your belt!" he ordered.

Miller used the belt to strap Kranz's arms behind him, drawing the leather tight just above the elbows. He then awakened Peel, and repeated the process of binding on the next thwart. Making the end of the rope fast to the after thwart, he sank back, satisfied. Both men were securely lashed to their seats by an endless line, and their arms pinioned effectively to prevent their picking the rope strands apart or assisting each other.

Almost exhausted by his efforts, Miller lay down to sleep. On he slept through the afternoon and through the night, heedless of the cries for relief, and the threats and blasphemies of his hungry, thirsty and cramped captives. For fully eighteen

hours he slept. When he finally awoke he was much refreshed, but was even weaker physically than before. He released the men, and passed out food and water. Then he ordered them to the oars again.

It was high noon when he allowed them to rest, and they immediately tumbled into the bottom of the boat.

For hours Miller let them sleep, too apathetic to arouse them. He knew he was lost, for the boat had drifted far from their course while he slept. At times he sank into a state of semi-drowsiness, a morbid stupor. He aroused himself, and for a space keenly watched the sleepers.

He dropped to his knees before the chest, and lifted the cover. On top of the precious heap lay a huge crucifix of solid gold set with large rubies. Red and glowing, their bloody effulgence flashed in the sunlight. Miller crossed himself as he gazed upon it. Reverently, he finally lifted the cross.

Half an hour later he closed the chest and sat down upon it, feeling satisfied that his purpose had been well accomplished.

Peel and Kranz still slept.

Once more Miller began to grow delirious. Over the side of the boat, not eight feet away, the glistening fin of the man-eater cut smoothly through the water. It glided along with scarcely a ripple.

A small, pale, cruel, glary eye looked up at him. His unstrung nerves made him scream in terror, then in futile rage he put a bullet hole through the fin. Again he shot, and still again, and the fin disappeared.

Peel and Kranz sat up and rubbed their eyes.

"Out with the oars!" screamed Miller, "and pull like hell! Row, damn you, row! Leave it behind! Leave it behind! It's after me! It's after me!"

For a mile the men tugged and sweated at the oars in deadly fear of the raving madman who sat on the chest in the stern and waved a gun, and cursed, and reviled them as he urged them to greater effort.

And then—Miller wilted!

His nerveless fingers relaxed. The revolver dropped with a clatter. Back against the tiller he collapsed like a pricked bubble.

Like jackals, Peel and Kranz dropped their oars, and stumbled over the seats to the treasure chest. Peel's foot collided with the water-breaker, and upset it, but neither of them heeded the accident in the slightest, so intent were they upon reveling in the riches for which they had sweated and suffered all the agonies of hell in the past few days. They wanted to get their fingers upon it, to feel it, to know it was there.

Roughly, they pulled Miller from the chest. Jointly, jealously, suddenly suspicious of each other, they threw back the lid. Peel gasped! Simultaneously, each looked at the other.

The chest was empty!

For a moment neither spoke. Peel glanced down at Miller.

"Curse his heart! The preachin' knave got the best of us after all. Shoved the last bit of gold overboard, as he said he would. Damn him! He can follow it!" He started to drag the unconscious man out from under the after thwart, but at the exclamation of horror from Kranz at discovering the loss of the water, he dropped Miller.

The catastrophe was overwhelming. Turned over by Peel's hasty and unheeding foot, the precious fluid had gurgled out and mingled with the blackened and dirty sea-water in the bottom of the boat.

They found their oars were missing. Left in the tholepins in the hasty rush aft, they had slid out into the sea. The momentum of the boat had carried it five or six fathoms from the floating oars, and the distance was widening.

Peel looked at the oars, kicked off his shoes and made ready to swim for them, but he paused.

A triangular dorsal fin, with three clean-cut bullet holes through the cartilage, glided lazily, Nemesis-like, between the boat and the oars.

They looked at each other helplessly again. Each felt the cold, clammy hand of an unseen being laid upon him. Kranz

licked his lips. His mouth was too dry for words. Then he dropped on his knees in the bottom of the boat. He lifted his head, and raised his clasped hands weakly.

With the habitual sneer on his cruel lips, the beachcomber looked down at the kneeling man and scoffed. But the sneer gradually faded, as the full realization of their predicament came over him. A moment later, Peel, too, was kneeling.

"Say, Dutchy," he whispered huskily, "what was that stuff Miller was sayin' about 'No other Gods before Me'? Was that a prayer?"

"Nein! I vill teach you von!"

They had both failed to notice the black cloud approaching swiftly from the north. Came a few fitful gusts of wind, and then the tropical squall burst upon them with all its fury. The rain poured in torrents, at times almost driven in a horizontal sheet by the furious blast.

Peel leaped to the bow, as the boat spun around. By luck he managed to catch a floating oar as they drifted past it in the grasp of the wind. He was a seaman, and knew the boat would be swamped if it lay in the trough when the sea arose. Quickly, he took a turn of the painter around the oar as a makeshift oarlock over the bow, and swung the double-loaded boat to drive before the gale.

With Kranz bailing frantically, and Miller lying unconscious at the other end of the boat, the beachcomber strained at the improvised steering oar. Hour after hour he steadily held the little craft to the southward as it drove before wind and sea. Cold, hungry, weary, and all but exhausted, it was only his enormous strength that enabled him to hold out.

Night came. The boat still drove. The wind had settled down to a steady gale. Peel, with anxious eyes endeavoring to penetrate the gloom ahead, began to wonder where they would fetch up. He had long since lost all idea of direction. His only hope was to keep the tiny craft afloat. When handled properly, a whaleboat is a good sea boat, and with the desperation of a cornered animal fighting for its life, Peel struggled with the sea.

At midnight, he saw a broad line of phosphorous through the spume ahead. To the right and the left it stretched out as far as his vision could reach in the darkness. He knew it to be breakers. With this mountainous sea running, perhaps it meant the end. He didn't care, he was so utterly tired and cold.

Summoning his last remaining energy, he managed to keep the bow of the boat headed towards the beach when it was caught in the maw of the surf. They rode on the summit of a curling breaker. At express-train speed it carried them in towards the shore. When it broke, it left them behind in the whitened water. The steering oar snapped into two pieces. The boat broached to. The next breaker capsized it.

Peel and Kranz were thrown into the water. Miller was beneath the boat, caught in the thwart. A third breaker, following closely, dashed the two against the side of the overturned craft with stunning force.

When the tropical dawn came, it saw two bodies stiff and stark on the beach. They were Peel and Kranz. The stoved-in boat lay just beyond the reach of the surf. Miller had disappeared.

Some months later two officials stood on the deck of the government steamer, as it lay at the dock of San Sebastian, two miles from Santa Marta Mission.

Three monks came onto the pier to supervise the distribution of the cargo of supplies, which was destined for the mission. One of the three was hollow-eyed, esthetic looking.

"Say," remarked one of the officials after scrutinizing him closely, "doesn't that monk remind you of Miller? Remember Miller, the man who shot Scanlon in Hong Kong? Bad record, he had!"

"He does resemble him a little," replied the other official, "but that is Brother Luis. He is working out some great penance. Miller would never be doing that. He wasn't that kind of a man!"

Brother Luis overheard. He turned away to hide the peculiar smile which played for a moment on his thin lips.

THE STRIKE AT NEALY'S

BY EARL H. EMMONS

There are strikes for higher wages and strikes for shorter hours, sympathy strikes and hunger strikes; but this story deals with none of them. It introduces something absolutely new in the strike line.

T five in the morning, Buck Ellis was sleepily pushing a dirty wet rag back and forth along the bar when the doors of the dingy saloon were kicked open and Nealy, misanthropic philanthropist and owner of the Twelfth Avenue dive, strode in. That is, he gave as good an imitation of striding as his condition would permit, which was hardly a success, because Nealy had just come from an all-night champagne party.

Ellis, a hard-faced, blear-eyed product of the underworld, glanced at his employer disinterestedly and continued his scrubbing. Nealy's gaze wandered around the empty room; he hung his cane on his arm and lurched against the bar.

"Well," he growled huskily, "how's business?"

"Nothin' doin'," replied his employee, and went on wiping the near-mahogany.

"Nothin' doin'!" repeated Nealy, and his big face colored.

"Say, what's the matter with this bunch of live-stock? What's the matter with you? Didn't I tell you I needed the dough?"

"Now look here," grated Ellis, as he leaned forward, "don't get mussy with me 'cause I don't stand fer it. I been givin' 'em the number eight prescription ever since you told me, but don't think I'm goin' to knock somebody in the head fer you or anybody else. Get me?"

For an instant, the two men glared at each other. Then the boss averted his eyes.

"Who's next?" he asked.

"Accordin' to the looks of things, Miller is due with Hoffman runner-up an—"

"Miller! Hoffman!" exploded Nealy. "Miller and Hoffman be damned! Where's Quinn? Is this place goin' to be turned into an old-folks' home or is it goin' to continue a business proposition? What about Quinn?"

Ellis remained undisturbed. "Didn't show up last night," he replied. "Guess he slept in an alley."

Nealy seemed on the verge of apoplexy. "Alley, hell!" he said, and banged his fist down. "More likely he got himself pinched and will be kept in until he sobers up. What d'you let him get away for?"

"Say, that's about enough from you," threatened Ellis. "If you don't like the way I run this joint you get somebody else, see!"

"Now listen, Buck," the owner soothed; "I ain't meanin' anything, but you know how long that rum-hound has hung on here and he's the most expensive proposition we've got on hand. Last week, when he began throwin' fits—well, I thought he was about due so I—you see, I sort of figured things was comin' strong and I plunged a little deeper than usual on the prospects. Business has been so cussed dull I finally had to mortgage the place to pay the last premiums and if something don't break pretty soon, we're goin' to be in a devil of a fix for cash."

Buck Ellis, cooled down to normal again, leaned his head on his hands, stared at his bar rag and tried to appear deeply concerned.

"You know, Buck," Nealy went on, "Quinn is the prize of this bunch, because I played him to the limit, and if we don't collect quick we're goin' to be up against it."

Ellis still seemed engaged in solving some difficult problem and did not reply.

Nealy shifted his position, leaned his back against the bar, propped his elbows against the edge and stared at, but not through, the dirty windows. "If only that bird would go out and get in front of a truck like McCabe, or walk off the dock like Kane, or mix in a few free-for-alls,—but he won't. He's too cussed careful for this business and if we don't get some results soon, we'll have to drop him—and a lot more, too."

Truly, here was a discouraging situation. For the first time since he had opened his business three years before, Charles Nealy, saloon-owner, misanthropic philanthropist, friend of the down-and-outs and man-about-town of the lower order, found himself in financial difficulties which promised, or threatened, ruin. And it was such a good business, too.

It had all started when a derelict drifted in one cold night and made his unusual offer. He would have his life insured and made payable to Nealy if Nealy would give him a place to sleep and a drink occasionally while he was out of work. The proposition was startling at first, even to the Twelfth Avenue saloonkeeper, but the deal was finally made.

Then came the treatment. First, the derelict was sobered up, cleaned, shaved, put into a cheap but new suit of clothes and made to look fairly respectable. Then, with a tale of woe, he was able to secure a policy for five hundred dollars, payable to Nealy, his "brother." He then had a drink or two with his well-meaning benefactor and started out to look for work.

Work, somehow, seemed to have an elusive way of dodging him, but his thirst stayed on and then, one night, after tramping the streets all day and going without food, he had two or three drinks of the chemical Nealy called "whiskey" and, owing to his weakened condition, he fell to the floor in a spasm.

It was then that Nealy conceived an idea and when the derelict was again on his feet, his benefactor was kinder to him than ever. There was no mention of work, but always there was plenty to drink, and presently work was entirely forgotten and the man settled down to the business of drinking himself to death, while Nealy cheerfully paid premiums on the policy and dealt out the liquor.

Then, after a few days, Nealy began experimenting. He mixed things with the whiskey for his patient. He tried a little wood alcohol, a trifle of strychnine, and did what he could to help things along. Before the new suit was worn out, his investment fell on the street in delirium tremens, was taken to the police station, and the next morning completed his part of the agreement.

When he collected the five hundred, Nealy sat down and figured up. He entered the price of the suit, the so-called examination fee, the three monthly premiums, estimated the cost of the whiskey, threw in a substantial amount for incidentals and discovered he had cleared nearly three hundred dollars.

This was a moderate beginning, to be sure, but the idea had fixed itself in the saloon-keeper's mind and he was ambitious. Thus he became the friend of the down-and-outs, the misanthropic philanthropist, and in due time acquired his other titles.

It was hard work at first. He had to rent the floor above his saloon and fit it up with bunks; he had to work out a system of treatment for preparing the candidates so they would pass inspection; he had to acquire numberless aliases so that he could be the "brother" to his various investments and, hardest of all, he had to make a study of the insurance companies, minor lodges and benefit organizations, which were lax enough to suit his purpose.

But the business had grown. He had worked hard, during that first year, and though the disappointments were many, yet he prospered. Sometimes, after he had made the initial investment for clothes, soap, etc., his candidates would be refused by the companies. Sometimes after the deal was made, the insured would not stick, but above all, there had been a substantial profit and Nealy finally was able to hire a bartender so that he could devote his own time to outside business and pleasure.

During the next two years, things had

gone along fine. The system was changed and improved—from Nealy's standpoint. He had eliminated his free-lunch counter, reasoning that if his investments did not eat they would drink more and thereby hasten the happy end. He had worked out a good training course to prepare his candidates to pass the examination. He had branched out and used insurance companies in nearby towns. He had devised a well-planned series of treatments, whereby his charges were each day given stronger mixtures than the day previous, so that they were brought gradually, but surely, to the point where the deal was finished with a flourish. Then he had placed knives in handy places and was gratified when he saw one missing, for he hoped that quarrels might start among his investments, and knives would help materially in bringing in cash returns. Finally, Nealy had found an outlet for the by-product of his business. He received from twenty to fifty dollars from colleges for each of his protegés after he had finished with them.

So the business had gone merrily along until the coming of Quinn. Nealy had debated with himself at length before taking Quinn, because he looked too healthy, despite the fact that he was shattered by drink. Nealy realized that it would take longer to realize on Quinn than on his customary candidates, but the fact that he was able to secure a policy for four times the ordinary amount made the newcomer a desirable prize.

Thus does a little thing sometimes upset great expectations, as a pebble may start an avalanche or a mouse break up a suffrage meeting. From the day Quinn joined the ranks there was trouble. First, he couldn't drink enough. A few glasses of the stuff Buck Ellis dealt out would put him to sleep before he had had enough to do real harm. There were times when he even stooped so low as to ask for beer, and Nealy suspicioned he was frequenting other saloons where free lunch was served and all this tended to offset the treatment and postpone collection day.

So the friend of the down-and-outs was worried. He had spent so much money lately that he could not meet the premiums and had to mortgage his place. Now, more premiums were rapidly becoming due and unless some of his charges gave him the necessary assistance by climbing the Golden Stair, he might lose his business.

And at the very minute he was leaning on the bar, pondering over these things, more trouble was brewing, but he was blissfully ignorant of it. At that minute Quinn was leaning against a friendly post in a nearby alley, giving a correct imitation of a novice on the high seas.

Quinn's stomach had never been robust despite his healthy appearance and when, the night before, after consuming several doses of Buck's prescription number eight,—a mixture of whiskey and strychnine,—he had stepped out to get some fresh air, his system rebelled. When the uprising took place Quinn was wandering through an alley. The cramps tied complicated knots in his entrails and he crawled under a back stoop, curled up and bade the world farewell.

Never before had Nealy come so near to realizing on an investment without collecting, but when daylight came, Quinn awakened to the fact that he still was several per cent alive although his stomach felt as if it had been kicked by a mule. It was some time before he could balance himself sufficiently to permit successful locomotion, and just as he did so an idea struck him. It was the first idea he had had for a long while and he had to steady himself once more against his friendly post while he figured out his problem. All at once he reached the solution,—food, he needed food. He knew it; and right there trouble in allopathic doses began to accumulate for the misanthropic philanthropist.

Two hours later, after Quinn had consumed a five-course breakfast,—one course in each of five saloons,—he slipped up the back stairway into the upper room, over Nealy's place, where the "flops" were located.

They were all there,—Nealy's investments,—in various stages of intoxication, poisoning and odor; and after several

minutes of earnest effort, Quinn managed to get his audience propped up in the back of the room, which was over the storehouse and beyond hearing distance of the bar.

Then he began his oration. At first he was kept busy knocking heads together to keep his hearers awake, but finally he succeeded in getting his message across. He told them the facts as he had figured them out. Nealy, instead of being a benefactor, was, in reality, a crook. He was taking an unfair advantage of them by serving no free lunch, thus forcing them to drink more, so he could collect the insurance money sooner.

"Of course, y' understand," Quinn told them, "I ain't findin' fault with th' general plan. The old man picks us up an' gives us a place to flop an' all we want t' drink fer th' privilege o' insurin' our carcasses so's t' get paid back when we kick off. As a business proposition an' from a human'tarium standpoint it's all right; but the Declaration o' Independence gives every guy th' right t' eat, drink an' pursue happiness, an' when the eats is missin' we ain't gettin' our—our legal rights!"

Quinn was not totally familiar with his subject or constitutional privileges, but his hearers were impressed, and amid many hiccoughs they agreed with him.

"This mornin'," continued the orator, "I was ready t' kick th' bucket, I was that weak an' sick; an' if I had tooka coupla drinks I woulda been laid out by this time wit' a lily in me han', but all at once I thinks o' me rights an' I nearly cleaned out all th' chuck in a half-a-dozen gin mills, an' look at me now."

His audience looked at him and he went on:

"There's only one thing t' do, brothers, an' we're gonna do it. We're gonna strike!"

The audience straightened up, hiccoughed two or three rounds and waited.

"Yes, sir," continued Quinn, "we're gonna strike. They's been wage-strikes an' hour-strikes, sympathy-strikes, an' hunger strikes, an' they all got what they wanted. If they can do it, we can do it. We're gonna have a thirst strike!"

This statement caused a stir. Part of Quinn's hearers looked at him with admiration, others in fear, for there wasn't one among them who wouldn't, at that very moment, sell not only his body, but throw his soul in for good measure for a drink, yet they waited. The members of this motley gathering had always pursued the course of least resistance and had been helped along by kicks, until they thought there was no other road.

Now it filtered slowly through their whiskey-soaked brains that collectively they were a power; they began to see the importance of organization and were anxious to try it out.

"As I said," continued the speaker, "I was ready t' kick off until I got a mess o' chow. Look 't me now! An' hereafter I'm goin' t' have chuck er I don' drink. If I don' drink I'll live longer an' th' old man 'll go broke payin' insurance dues. There's the system, gem'men; an' now if yo're mutts an' ain't got sand 'nough t' get what's comin' t' yo', go ahead an' starve, but if yer have foller me an' show this bloke we know our rights an' that we're gonna have 'em!"

Quinn's speech was a mixture of patent-medicine testimonial and the address of Spartacus to the Gladiators at Capua, and it got across with a majority vote.

"Now," announced the leader, "we're gonna march down an' deliver our ultimater—an' any guy that tries t' sneak a drink by is gonna feel somethin' sharp an' pointed in his ribs. March!"

Nealy was awakened by a violent ringing of the telephone in his apartment. He swore mildly and answered. As he listened his dissipated face grew two shades paler and his profanity increased with a running jump.

When he reached his saloon, his worst fears were realized. Buck Ellis, calm and unconcerned, was listlessly wiping an unoccupied bar. Nealy glared savagely around the room. Buck nodded toward the stairway, and the friend of the down-and-outs charged upwards.

To Buck Ellis, there drifted fragments of outrageous language, among which he caught such words as, "ungrateful curs—

think this is a boarding house?—home for bums,—in hell first."

Then came a crash and a muffled revolver shot, followed an instant later by a stampede of feet down the back stairs, then dead silence.

For a space Buck Ellis stood perfectly still, even forgetting to mop the bar. Then he rushed up the steps and fell over two forms. One was Miller, the investment scheduled to fall due next. He had a hole through his head and a knife in each hand. Beside him lay Nealy with more holes in his anatomy than had Cæsar after Brutus had staged his little affair.

"Yeh," explained Buck to the police a little later, "th' old man musta been jumped on by this guy first an' shot the' bloke through the head as he went down. No, they wasn't nobody else in th' place at the time."

Later he condoled with himself thus: "Gee, the mortgage 'll clean up th' joint an' I'll lose me job. I oughta had th' old man insured; I sure oughta had him insured."

NEXT month: BIG BROTHER *by John Matter,* an entertaining story in which a Chicago truck driver tries homesteading on the Arctic Circle. He finds that he has a longing for the soft coal smoke, the hot, spongy asphalt, the lake ozone and the glad lights of Chicago, with a big, cool drink of beer for good measure. But most of all, he wishes to collect a debt; and the realization of his wish enables him to figure a net profit without turning over the soil of his homestead acres.

WITHOUT THE LAW

BY JOSEPH T. KESCEL

Waiting for Justice is generally a painful and expensive operation. The youth may be excused who becomes impatient, takes off his coat, and starts something, especially when he has just made up his mind to fight for himself "and a woman forever and ever. Amen."

BEFORE Norton was fairly inside the "Iron Dollar" bunkhouse, everyone within earshot knew something out of the ordinary had happened.

"Boys! I've been kited off my claim!" He spat the words out in a tone that showed his feelings had been downright ruffled.

"What's this? What's this?" sang out half a dozen miners, crowding around him.

"Chased off my claim! Thirty minutes ago, Big John Cardiff and five of his pug-nosed man-eaters breezed into my cabin and boosted me outside. Cardiff's Winchester jabbed against my ribs made me listen to his explanations. 'Be ready to beat it right after I finish talking,' he said, giving me an extra jab with the muzzle. 'What right you got holding this ground without fulfilling government requirements? You know you haven't done a hundred dollars' worth of work. I'm taking possession here and it's your move. Get across the boundary line, and remember something will surely happen if your feet accidentally turn this way. A while ago, I offered you a good price for this claim and you turned it down, but that was before I looked up your title!' A nod from the big scut, and I was Spanished over the side lines—"

"You mean to say that frog-faced thug bounced you off your own claim?" one of the boys broke in.

"Yep. Spanished. Danced over the side line with two of Cardiff's bung starters holding me by the bosom of my trousers and coat collar! I tried fighting 'em, but couldn't lick a whole truck load." He had worked up a real fighting face that spelled trouble for someone, while spilling his hard luck story to the bunch.

Almost two years before this little seance, Frank Norton had headed straight for Montana after leaving his home in York State. His father owned one of those big dairy farms so common in Orange County. Cows, and all grades of milk, from A to where the grades stop, were entirely familiar to the youngster even before the old man mapped out a course for his son at Cornell.

"Dad," young Norton had repeatedly said, "yelling 'so-o-o, Bossy,' and chasing calves is all right for those that like it, but I don't. I'd rather try my chances in the West."

"My son, I'm surprised," Pa Norton had many times replied. While Ma Norton had as often snorted, "Well, I declare! To think a son of mine should want to go way out West! Something terrible would surely happen to him among those bloodthirsty people he's certain to meet."

The old folks finally gave in and the youngster hit the trail, leaving the livestock in care of Pa Norton and his four other sons.

Frank could have made the trip to Council Creek sooner, had he paid his way and gone as a passenger. Or, if walking had been better, the time could have been cut down considerably.

Day was just breaking, several weeks later, when he dropped from a freight and grinned up at the conductor and two brakemen who had chased him over a long line of box cars.

Council Creek, like a great many other places, looked better on the map than in reality. It was a lively little place, how-

ever, being the headquarters for several large freight outfits which supplied the towns and mines back from the railroad. On the return trip to Council Creek, the wagons, almost as big as box cars, would be loaded with ore or anything else that could be picked up to make a paying load.

One of these wagons, standing close beside the track, caught Norton's eye. "She's a wagon, all right, for there are the wheels," he said aloud, taking it in from every angle. "I wonder what's in her." He swung a foot onto the hub of a front wheel and drew himself up. A second step, and his foot rested on the broad tire. Then his head went over the edge of the wagon body, for a peek inside. His curiosity was over satisfied as a sawed-off shotgun touched his nose.

"What you want?" Billy Freeman, who spent the night guarding two hundred sacks of rich ore, asked the question, while thumbing the hammers of his gun.

"Nothing. I was just looking over your wagon. Never saw one like it before."

Freeman sized Norton up for something above an ore thief, and lowered his sawed-off. A few minutes later, though, he half wished he hadn't, for the kid began shooting out questions like a gatling gun.

"You say the rock in those bags is ore?"

"Yup."

"Real ore from the mines?"

"No, not from the mines. It's picked from the trees—just before they go to seed."

Norton laughed, but his curiosity was still unsatisfied. "Do you mind if I lift one?"

"Nope. Fact is, all of 'em have to be loaded into a car, and the job's yours if you want it."

Norton's right hand shot down before Freeman had finished speaking, and his fingers fastened onto a sack corner the same as he would have grabbed a bag of feed back on the farm.

"Gee! But she's heavy!" he grunted, as his fingers slipped off. "Who'd ever think a little bag like that would weigh so much?" A second attempt with both hands, and he jerked it up, his face wrinkling into a smile.

Freeman had sized the kid up for a tenderfoot, before this. Also, he had figured him regular man, and he wasn't downhearted when Norton asked if he might make the trip with him back to the Iron Dollar.

That ride, forty miles across country from Council Creek, was an eye-popper for the youngster. He was as tickled as a jack rabbit gormandizing in a cabbage patch. The twenty-four horses strung out ahead of the wagon, and guided by a jerk line, claimed some of his attention. He tried not to overlook anything, though, and kept his head swinging around like a weathercock. While his eyes were taking in the country, his tongue wigwagged at Freeman continuously. But what tickled him the most was being headed for the mines,—the mines, where a few days' work sometimes turned off a fortune! A year or so, and he would go back home with a stack of bills bigger than a bale of hay. He was feeling mighty frisky when he bumped up against me, holding down my job as foreman of the Iron Dollar mine.

"Mr. Quigley?"

I looked up from a pile of gold ore, and took him in. Right away, I liked him, every bit of him, from his black hair, smiling eyes, and good-natured face right down to his number ten shoes.

"That's me," I finally drawled. "What you want?"

"I'm looking for a job."

"Miner?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I can make use of you." That night his name was written on the time-book, and behind it, the word "mucker."

One peek into a freight wagon when his curiosity registered about six hundred degrees Fahrenheit, had mapped out a big change for old man Norton's favorite son. With his head up, he went at his new work of shoveling the broken ore underground. Before the first month rolled by, he'd passed the muckers' stage, and pounded a drill with the miners. And before three monthly pay checks had been cashed, he thought he knew as much about mining as anyone in the camp, even Fred Wilson, the superintendent. He tackled the

game from every angle, including books, and his enthusiasm always registered the high mark on the thermometer.

His first visit to Wilson's was to borrow a book on mining. His second, was to return it; that volume of five hundred pages having been read in one evening, so he unblushingly declared. Record breaking work that; especially when on every page, mixed with gold, silver, copper, and the earth's formations, was a wavy mass of light golden hair, two dancing blue eyes, and a mighty pretty face that peeped at him between the lines.

He'd met Evelyn Wilson the first time he called at her father's. The second time, she met him at the door. After that, there was a bonanza pay streak in their eyes every time they looked at each other.

Evelyn was one of those girls that made you think, "I'm glad I know her." Tall, fine looking, and just a dandy disposition. Twenty-one, a year or so younger than the kid, and also a graduate of some highbrow factory. Most natural thing in the world that she and Norton should keep on cultivating their minds. Natural thing, also, that while they sat side by side poring over quartz, granite, porphyry, dykes, dips, spurs and angles of a vein, etc., something else should develop.

His case had been worse than a bad dose of valvular palpitation of the heart since their first meeting. Maybe a person shouldn't make remarks about the ladies, but her symptoms were pretty much the same as his.

A few months of working for wages, and Norton began scouting around for a mine of his own. Down below the Iron Dollar, was a big copper outcrop. Most everyone in the district knew about it. Also, everybody knew the ore was very low grade. Even the youngster knew it, but he was looking farther ahead than the rest of us; and after he had put up stakes, calling the claim the "Marion"—Evelyn's middle name—nothing could move him excepting human brutes such as Cardiff and his gang.

Big John had become intensely interested in Norton's claim when he learned that many low grade copper propositions were paying good dividends. In fact, he became so interested that the Marion was soon completely surrounded by ground upon which he had posted location notices. The youngster had the choice claim, however, and without it the rest didn't amount to much.

Cardiff knew where he could unload the whole group at a mighty big price, and he went after the Marion. His offer of a few hundred dollars was turned down right pronto. Being so durned grasping, he wouldn't raise his bid and hustled to his lawyer.

"Give the kid what he asks. You'll get it back, ten times over," was the lawyer's counsel.

"But he wants fifty thousand dollars."

"Give it to him."

"No, sir! Nothing doing at that price!"

The lawyer wrinkled his nose. "Well—I—I— there is another way open."

"What's that? Give it to me."

"Possession is nine points of the law. Boost him off on the last day of December. Get your location notice into the recorder's office right after midnight. He's done the required amount of work all right," said the lawyer easily, "but it'll be no trouble for you to get witnesses to swear that he hasn't. With you and your men on the ground, nothing but a law suit will help him, and mighty few people are buying those, nowadays."

The Marion looked so good to Cardiff that he was on the spot all harnessed for business by three o'clock on the day set by the lawyer. His hopes were running pretty high after he'd chased Norton off his own claim; while the youngster's were down in the cellar.

Sympathy never bounced six well-heeled men very far, and sympathy was all we could offer. The only shooters around the bunkhouse were a twenty-two target rifle and a shotgun; not exactly the weapons to bristle up against a half dozen Winchesters. The West isn't what it used to be, when everyone kept a gun hot on his hip. Suggestions and advice were wirelessed from all sides with a lot of feeling. They're all right, but they're no more use than blank cartridges against

heeled claim jumpers. Maybe Norton hadn't done double the amount of work required by the govenment to hold a claim. I would have sworn that he had, though, and so would anyone else that understood mining. A lot of time which might have been put to better advantage sinking a shaft, was put into a five-room log house.

Along in the summer, he'd got a letter from the old folks, saying they would pay him a visit right after New Year's. He said that was the reason for being so particular about a place to live. Maybe it was, but everybody around the Iron Dollar linked that job of house building with Evelyn.

When the kid saw that all we were able to give him that thirty-first of December was sympathy and advice, he bolted from the bunkhouse and hustled to his girl. Right then, it looked as if Pa and Ma Norton would be obliged to enjoy Montana's untropical climate in some other place than their son's new home. Already, the youngster could fancy the old man saying with a grin, "Guess they've put one over on you!" Also, Ma Norton's, "Land sakes! It's just what you could expect in such a country!"

By the time young Norton reached Wilson's, his mad was almost kicking his hat off.

Sitting side by side, holding each other's hands, he and Evelyn went into consultation. He was pretty much excited, but she only looked grave. "I wish father were here," she said, sort of mournful. "He might help us. But as he isn't, we'll have to do our best."

Norton jumped up. "I'll try to catch him at Council Creek, by 'phone. No, they have outfigured us and cut the wire!" While he had been twisting the telephone handle and yelling into the transmitter, a lot of ideas had been sprouting under his scalp. "Gr-r-r-r! I'll blow them up! That big scut isn't going to get away with this!"

"No, no! You mustn't! Not that!"

"But you wouldn't expect me to let him get away with this without doing something?"

"No-o-o, but there must be some other way. Besides, you could never reach the house without being seen. The law—"

"The law will do us a lot of good tomorrow! It's up to you and me, Evelyn, to get those coyotes off the claim—and get them off before midnight. I've figured out how it can be done."

"How?"

"I could use the aerial tramway. Scatter the house all over the hillside, with no danger to myself."

"The aerial tramway! That gives me an idea of my own."

Immediately, the consultation became a real pow-wow. The little scheme they hatched out during the next ten minutes, once more showed that brains are aces ahead of brute strength.

Norton was sizzling with excitement when he came bouncing into the bunkhouse again.

In the hour he had been away, we'd everyone worked up a new batch of suggestions. Half a dozen of us opened up the instant he stepped inside, but we were cut short.

"Boys," he snapped, "if you'll give me a hand, they're going to vamoose."

"Sure!" everybody chorused. The man with the target rifle grabbed the pea shooter, while the owner of the shotgun slipped two loaded shells into the barrels.

The world was mighty little older when all hands hit the collar with a rush; a fifty-pound case of high per cent dynamite occupying everyone's attention, even the girl's. We were working against time, for that job had to be completed before dark. The light was still good when we filed into the loading station of the tramway, which had been installed for the cheap transportation of the Iron Dollar's low grade ore to the mill, some two miles distant. Where the tramway passed over Norton's house, the cables which supported the buckets were nearly a hundred feet up in the air.

Norton carefully placed a crate of dull yellow bundles in one of the buckets. Three fuses, with their ends cut ready for the match, protruded from between the slats. The opposite ends of the fuses were lost in three rolls of heavy oiled paper, whose sides displayed the trade-mark,

"Strong Arm Powder Company." A long rope was carefully coiled beside the crate, before the youngster buttoned his mackinaw and squared his shoulders for the real business.

Most of the men had already streaked it downstairs to the ground, when the kid took the girl in his arms and kissed her. "You're a brick, little girl!" he whispered.

She snuggled close to him for a moment, and he then stepped into the bucket. "Let 'er go!" he sang out, while crouching down until only his head showed above the bucket's edge. He blew the girl another kiss as I threw off the brake, and the cable began to pay out.

Gradually the bucket became smaller, and then became only a dark spot traveling in the air.

Evelyn had had a pretty hard time to convince herself that Norton should make this trip. She'd cried a little at first, but after giving her consent, stood pat. Standing close to my elbow, with her eyes glued to a pair of field glasses, I knew she wasn't going to overlook the expected signal.

"Stop!" she suddenly sang out, without taking the glasses from her eyes.

I jammed on the brake, bringing the bucket to a stop, and feeling pretty well satisfied that Norton was now getting ready to do some skylarking right above his own home.

The stop had been guaged to a nicety. Norton said afterward that he believed he could have dropped a plumb line down the chimney without any trouble at all. Five seconds later, a cloud of smoke floated up from the bucket as the fuses were touched off. The crate was lifted over the side and carefully lowered. Foot by foot, the rope paid out until the deadly looking package touched the roof of the house. It slid over the shingles to the eaves and dropped farther down.

A pair of eyes spotted it as it passed the window. Cardiff, who'd planned to spend the first part of the night in his new possession, let a yelp out of him that almost loosened the rafters before the crate reached the ground. The big scut and his hired bouncers all knew dynamite, and how to use it. They also knew what would happen to them if fifty pounds of high per cent went off. Every log in the building would be splintered over the hillside.

Big John was not the only one to see the three smoking fuses, or the familiar words, "Strong Arm Powder Company." He was, however, the first to reach the door and dart through. Norton hadn't built his doorways expecting five big huskies to bolt through, abreast. The last one to start was the second out, for he sky-rocketed over the others who had jammed tight against the sides.

None of those six coyotes was built for speed, but they clipped seconds off the record quarter-mile dash before racing over the Marion's side line. Cardiff's tongue was sticking out so you could have hung your hat on it. But he still led the procession.

The youngster had taken their break through the doorway, as a signal to get into action himself. He swung over the edge of the bucket and began sliding down the rope. They were still running when his feet touched the ground, the grin on his face broadening every second.

The boys who had but a short time previously hustled from the loading station, also took the six sprinters' getaway as a signal to swing into action. They charged from a ravine, yelling like Comanches, and made straight for Norton's. All hands bolted inside just about the time the big stiff and his gang loped out of sight behind a low foothill. Everybody wanted to do his share in making that package look less deadly, and he surely did. One by one, those yellow death dealers were emptied of the sawdust which we had so industriously placed inside the wrappers, after moving the high per cent explosive.

In the presence of Pa Norton and me, Cardiff pundled up sixty-five thousand dollars. The price of the Marion had gone up considerably on account of the inconvenience of the kid's little ride, and because Evelyn said they would need some extra money for their wedding trip in June.

THE INEVITABLE

BY ROBERT McBLAIR

In which two persons find happiness in a tuberculosis camp and feel sorry for the man back home who has been trying to drown his sorrow and whose self-respect is about to go down for the third time.

THEY came face to face unexpectedly on a street in that little hill-encircled city where three out of four are bound together by a common affliction; where a half empty sleigh will but rarely pass without offering the pedestrian a lift; where eggs are advertised as "suitable for eating raw;" and where a third of the population reclines on its porch, pallid and immovable, throughout the day and night—and laughs about it all.

Both were embarrassed. "Why, what are you doing in a place like this?" Clare exclaimed.

Hugh faced the thing manfully. "I am chasing the cure. And you? I suppose you are up for the ice carnival?"

"No," she smiled. "I am one of us, too!"

Both laughed.

"Well, we don't deserve any sympathy. I never saw you looking better in your life, Hugh."

"How about yourself? Why, you look like a meat-fed militant! It is certainly true that one has to come up here to see people who look really well. How long have you been here? Have you found out what 'cousining' is yet?"

She laughed. "Yes, but I haven't found a cousin!"

"Neither have I. I'm glad you still laugh so much. I like to see your teeth. And your eyes are as blue as ever. Where are you going? May I go too?"

"Yes, do. You can tell me what kind of snowshoes to get, and I've got to buy a 'pig.' It went down to twenty below last night. Isn't that terrible?"

"Horrible! Yet it is delightfully adventurous, too. Every night when I climb into my Klondyke I wonder whether I will wake up with a full set of ears and a nose."

"The most wonderful part of it to me," said Clare, as they crossed the snow-packed street, "is the popping of the trees when the cold settles down at night. It makes the cold something real and alive that grips the whole world and squeezes one's nose and makes the house crack and groan. I've stayed awake just to listen to it, and sometimes it frightens me."

He showed her how to tie on the snowshoes as the Indians do, with a single thong looped around the heel and a knot over the front of the foot where it can't bruise. The next day, after rest hour, was set as the time when he should go with her to try them out. That evening he stayed to dinner. That night they "cured" on the porch together, and watched the round moon rise above Mount Baker and make the world a haunt of shadow and silvery mystery.

It was about three months later that they went on the sleigh ride. Silently they rode through the still woods. It was a day of gray tree trunks and grayer clouds, with the feathered branches of the evergreens covered to the edges with pyramids of snow. Overhead a tracery of slender twigs supported hills of snow deeper than the width of a man's hand, and a silent lane of white wound before them, flanked by powdered and moss-grown trees and roofed by a delicate lattice work of white.

"Anyhow, we shall always be friends, Hugh," she said irrelevantly, turning to

him with a smile. "You are a friend of mine, aren't you, Hugh?"

"That doesn't express it," Hugh replied solemnly, and she colored.

They drove on through woods so like the forests of the old Norse gods that Hugh would not have been surprised to see great Woden himself come galloping through the thicket on a mammoth white horse.

The silence was becoming oppressive; he knew that if he spoke there was but one thing he could say; and he knew that he shouldn't say it. But, nevertheless, he spoke.

"Clare," he said, "I suppose you know that I love you?"

He saw the flush go up to where the spun-gold curls tucked under the knitted cap, and run down to where the round chin nestled in her furs.

"If you don't know it," he went on, "I am going to tell you, although I am a dog to do it, because, as you know, I can't get married. It's all I can do to support the mater and the girls when I'm well, and now that I'm a useless invalid," his voice grew husky, "God knows I can't do even that."

She put out her hand to stop him.

"No," he demurred, "let me finish. I am staking all on keeping them and myself on my savings for the next six months. If I win and get well enough to take the western job, I shall just be able to make both ends meet, providing Dorothy lands the job as society editress. If I lose, well, we needn't consider that.... Either way I'm a dog to say anything to you. But somehow," shaking his head slowly, "I just couldn't help it."

"Hugh! Please don't talk about yourself like that! You don't know what it means to me to have you tell me. It means the whole world and everything in it. If you hadn't I should have gone back home the most miserable woman alive. But now, but now— Hugh, don't you think you might, at least, kiss me once?"

The weeks flew by. "Oh, Hugh," Clare cried, one morning as he came up the steps of her porch, "guess what Doctor Baldwin has just told me!—that I can go back when I want to, and to forget I've even been sick! Isn't that wonderful?"

"Dandy!" he exclaimed, trying to equal her enthusiasm. "Fine! Now you are a regular person again. It is really too splendid to realize. Now you can go back and do anything you want....."

She must have sensed the pain in his voice.

"Yes, and leave you," she cried with eager contrition. "Leave you sick and alone! Oh Hugh! Isn't this a queer world?"

"Yes," he replied, "but it is the best one we know. You have a chance now to make the best of it."

"Come up here, you poor boy, and let's talk. We won't have many more talks, Hugh," she added sadly.

They bundled up in blankets and furs and reclined with their chairs close together while the rose-flush slowly left Mount Baker and the sky and earth turned to the thin, pale-blue of winter twilight.

"Do you know," said Clare, breaking the silence, "that what I dread most of all is seeing Curly again."

"Is he still so insistent?"

"Not so much insistent, but he says he still loves me, and he goes on drinking, and I feel so terribly responsible for it all. Up here I have been able to forget it."

"Why, it isn't your fault. If a man drinks like that it isn't the girl's fault, it's his own weakness."

"Yes, I know, Hugh; but he did stop when we were engaged, and I told him I loved him, and then, and then, I found out that I didn't. Oh, it's all so hopeless!"

"If I were only—"

"Now stop, Hugh. I'm not going to let you even think that. You are up here to get well, and if you have those awful 'if' thoughts, you'll never get well. I see how impossible it all is, and I am just going to make up my mind to accept the inevitable. Promise me that you will look at it that way too, Hugh."

But in spite of her bravery, that night

she clung to him and cried softly for a long, long time; and there was nothing that he could say.

The next night when he came, he saw that she had been crying again.

"I have been writing a letter," she told him.

"A letter?" He hoped for some lighter vein, but her expression showed that the tragic note was still on. "To whom?"

"To Curly," she said, in a dull voice.

"Let me see it." He held out his hand, feeling sure that she still had it with her.

"No," she replied, in a hopeless voice, "it would do no good."

"What did you tell him?"

Her lip trembled. "You will find out in time."

"What did you tell him?" he repeated.

"Do you really want to see it?"

"I do."

She took it from her pocket and gave it to him. It was stamped and addressed, but unsealed, and he read it in the lamplight that filtered out to the porch through the curtained window. He was silent for a long time, and gazed broodingly over to where old Baker loomed up pallidly against the stars.

"Do you love him?" he asked presently.

She was silent.

"Do you?"

"You know that I don't."

There was another long silence before he spoke. "Well," he said, slowly, "I hate to say anything about all this, because I suppose you know what you are doing, and because I haven't any right to influence you. You surely must be awfully certain of a man to write him a letter like that. That's what impresses me,—you must be dead certain of him, and that makes a lot of difference. If he loves you that much he ought to take care of you; and no doubt he would. But what I can't see is, how in the devil a woman can give herself to a man she doesn't love. They do it. I've known scores that have done it. I believe fifty per cent of marriages are of that kind. But I could never see it myself. What is the reason? Is it so necessary to get married?"

She answered in the same hopeless voice. "What difference does it make? I can't marry the person I want. I may as well marry Curly and try to be of some use in the world. I can make him happy and I owe him that. I can have children and make them happy. If I can be of some use in the world, what difference does it make whether I am happy or not?"

"Doesn't he drink?"

"He will stop if I marry him."

Hugh gave a gesture of impatience. "It is out of the question, that's all! You are in a despondent mood now because you are feeling so strongly the hopelessness of it all. This is no time to make a decision of so much importance, something that will determine your whole life. Wait until you get back and can think clearly; wait until you see Curly again. Think of what it would mean to send him this letter and then find out again when you see him that you can't possibly marry him."

"Give me my letter."

"I'll do no such thing. I'm going to take it home and make you think it over. Then, if you still want it, you can have it. Shall we take a drive tomorrow? It is not so cold, only about zero to-night, and that means ten or twenty above to-morrow. All right. I'll call for you at four."

The next afternoon she was alight with happiness; her mood was gone, and she nestled as close to him beneath the fur lap robe as their heavy fur coats would allow.

"Oh, I'm so glad, Hugh," she said, "that you didn't let me. I would have sent it. I was simply desperate yesterday. But I have thought over what you said, and I see it would be impossible. It would be horrible, horrible!" She shuddered.

"You little minx! I believe you just wrote that to see how strongly I would object!"

"No; I was really thinking of sending it. But I did want to see if you really would mind very much."

They both laughed, and this, their last drive together, was a gay one.

The next night she left for home. When he had finished checking her trunk, she drew him to one side for a

moment before the train started. "Remember, Hugh," she said, "whatever happens, I love you. I'll never marry Curly now; don't fear. I should have if I had mailed my letter to him that night, because I could never hurt him again the way I did before. But now I shall just go on loving you." Then she raised her mouth for a last kiss.

When the train had gone Hugh walked back to the cottage. She was going back to the busy world; she would find many things to interest her and keep her occupied, and presently, although she would not forget, it would be easier for her, and in time she would be happy. In time.... Who could say what would happen in time? He had a letter in his pocket to the president of his publishing company, saying that in another six months he would be in shape to take up the opening that they were holding for him in the West. This would mean a living wage, enough for Clare, too, maybe, if Dorothy landed the editorial job and if Diana's music class paid. Then, if he found that he could keep up the pace—well, who could say what would not happen in time?

He made a detour in order to go by the post office, and dropped in the letter abstractedly, his mind intent on getting back into the game.

The next day he drew from his pocket a letter. His face blanched. Apprehensive shivers played up and down his spine, while he continued to stare helplessly at the fateful epistle.

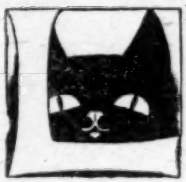
Later in the day he received a wild scrawl from Clare: "Oh, Hugh! How *could* you! How *could* you!"

THE bark *Miranda* had a clean record. She never had saddled a big repair bill on her owners, never had lost a spar below her to'gallantmasts, never had been brought to shame by an unruly crew. Then the sudden demand for tonnage caused by the war placed her in commission after five years' retirement, and she shipped a mutinous crew on the very first voyage. This story of THE UNSULLIED MIRANDA by *Mrs. David A. Wasson* will appear in the July issue.

THE PROD

BY GEORGE L. CATTON

Charde was a tobacco-eating brute who never thought of giving hostages to fortune because he never found time to think of anything but gold. As a man he assayed about thirty cents to the ton, and there was considerably less than two thousand pounds of him.



LIKE diamond dust the snow glittered on the solid river. Like great emeralds the stars hung quivering through the dead atmosphere. The long tongues of the aurora hissed in the silence, and it was ten miles to Kelly's.

Every time Charde's right hand and left knee plunged down into the snow, Charde lurched ahead twenty-one inches. Every time Charde's left hand and right knee plunged down into the snow, Charde lurched ahead twenty inches. He made twenty-six lurches a minute. So Charde made a mile every two hours. And behind him on a toboggan rode *the Prod.*

No matter what our urge may be, or whether we have an urge or not, the Prod we have always with us, spurring us on.

It was the Prod that got Charde.

Born in the smudge of a California gold-rush dance-hall, spawn of a frowsy doxy and a mule-muscled flathead, Charde was patently a mistake. Principally beef, he inherited from his mother the cunning of necessity; from his father, the sullenness and ferocity of a starving wolf; and from both, the hellish viciousness of primitive brains acrawl with stampede whiskey. To the lean and bitter years of a wasted youth he added other corruptions; till at thirty there remained but the massive frame and the virus of the Klondike gold strike.

He didn't possess a stimulus—only the shadow. His was the mere love of gold because it was gold. Like Midas, he loved the greasy feel of it, the yellow glint of it, the dead weight of it; but there, Midas-like again, his love came to a full and self-satisfying stop. He was too low in the intellectual order to realize that the love for gold is but a means to an end. So he lived to gather gold; to feel of it, glare at it, weigh it in his filthy paws; then, after he had gloated his fill, to convert it into a liquid hell to pour down his roaring throat.

Charde was known at Kelly's as the Bull. Every time he came into Kelly's to prop his awkward bulk against the bar and roar for whiskey, the regulars would hitch up their gun-belts and turn their backs to him. Always on the raw edge of a murderous explosion when drunk, his little red eyes warned even the most fuddled of the danger of the smallest spark of annoyance in the vicinity of that magazine of intoxicated rage. And he drank alone. Not that any of Kelly's regulars would have refused to drink with him, with whiskey at a dollar, but because he never extended an invitation. Charde travelled alone, worked alone, drank alone, —and nobody grieved. And the last time he packed his canoe at Kelly's and went up the river, the Prod got him.

The last time Charde went up river, he turned into a new tributary. A half mile up that creek, Allan MacFarlane and his wife were cleaning up five thousand a week; everybody knew that. Furthermore, their nearest neighbor was fifteen miles away. But Charde didn't do anything rash. When he reached MacFarlane's cabin he paddled across to the opposite side of the stream and for a full hour sat behind a clump of alders, eating tobacco, cursing other men's good luck and twirling the cylinder of his forty-five. Then he paddled on. Though all the other claims on the creek had pinched out and been abandoned, scarcely a summer's day

passed but someone rode the current,—and it was just ten miles to Kelly's.

When the winter came, when the creek and the river below were dead, and the few who were forced to travel cut off two miles by the other pass farther down then ....Charde looked more brute than human when he left MacFarlane's cabin behind.

Perchance it was the idea in his mind that blurred his vision; or maybe his luck had deserted him; or yet again, Providence may have had a hand in it. Be that as it may, when Charde started back to MacFarlane's cabin in December, his poke was as flat as his stomach; also both feet were frosted.

When he awoke from a drunken stupor beside an extinct fire, and found both feet dead, an empty match-box, and his flask dry, he rolled over on his knees and started down stream. Two miles below was MacFarlane's cabin. Just around the next bend of the creek were food and a fire, and a warm bunk to lie in till his feet were again fit for travel. And there was the gold—*gold!* Charde crawled through the snow, his wits driven by necessity, striving to formulate a plan of procedure.

He would keep out in the open and crawl straight for the cabin. And then, when MacFarlane came out to help him ....Charde halted and his hand went back to the revolver in his belt.

Then when he got around again, when he was fit for a long, hard trail again, he would leave Mrs. MacFarlane—that was—and start for Kelly's. Yes, he would start for Kelly's, but he wouldn't stop at Kelly's. In fact, he wouldn't stop at all till many, many miles lay between him and the handful of ashes that he would leave behind.

Charde was less than a hundred yards from MacFarlane's cabin when his plan matured. And then, as though MacFarlane had heard his muttered thoughts, a rifle bullet roared out from the cabin window and screamed above his head!

Instinctively Charde ducked. He stopped crawling and his right hand fumbled at his belt. He cursed. The rifle roared again. Charde dug down into the snow, his sharpened wits laboring resentfully. What was MacFarlane's idea? He had never done anything to MacFarlane. And if he wanted to shoot at him, why didn't he come out into the open.

A moment later, Charde raised his hand and poured five shots into the cabin, aiming for the window, but the whining lead still picked at him.

Allan MacFarlane was stark, staring mad. His wife was dead, and to his insane mind that crawling man out there was a thieving mob trying to rob him of his own, and his aim was as wild as his wits.

An hour passed. Charde reloaded his revolver and crawled out of the hole in the snow. Of the thirty-two screaming bullets not one had struck within a yard of him. Besides, it was quicker to die by lead than by frost. He crossed that hundred yards.

MacFarlane jerked open the door, threw down the muzzle of his rifle and pulled the trigger. He missed. Charde's answer ended the shooting, and he crawled into the cabin.

When the edge of daylight deserted the stars, Charde pulled MacFarlane's body away from the door and dragged out the toboggan. It was ten miles to Kelly's. Every time Charde's right hand and left knee plunged down into the snow, he lurched ahead twenty-one inches. Every time his left hand and right knee plunged down into the snow, he lurched ahead twenty inches. His right leg shrieked at him and he lost an inch.

Dead feet trailing just ahead of the toboggan, knees sinking deep with the weight of his tremendous bulk, mittened paw over mittened paw, Charde dogged through the glistening frost dust. Hour after hour, that thing of brutal brawn, that soulless mass of male animal, fought those ten white murderous miles to Kelly's. And he made it.

The first mile was easy. Fortified in his alcoholed heart with the last half cupful of MacFarlane's whiskey, Charde's pumping paws and plunging knees never once hesitated. Unmindful of the gruelling ache in his huge calves, he ploughed

ahead. But with the second half of the second mile came the inevitable reaction. Burned out, and consuming the keen edge of his energy in the burning, the dead alcohol clogged his veins. He stopped for a rest. Then as he went on, lapping over into the third mile, the unnaturalness of the wasted years behind him began to ride his muscles. An hour later, when the twilight faded out, he was travelling on sheer nerve. At the end of the fifth mile, one thing, and one thing only, kept him going. Behind him on the toboggan rode *the Prod.*

Knees plunging with automatic monotony, paw over paw doggedly,—feet,—rods, miles, with grim persistency he forged ahead. His fingers were benumbed. The pain in his calves had knawed up to his knees and died. And as the last tenth of that awful trail dragged itself beneath him, his pumped-out heart began to miss its beats, but he didn't rest. He dared not stop. A few hundred yards more and—

The Prod won.

The door of Kelly's swung slowly inward and Charde, the Bull, crawled across the threshold, dragging the toboggan on the snowless step. For a moment, while the astonished crowd gaped, the Bull tugged in the traces. Then he collapsed.

The crowd bestirred itself. Eager hands dragged the toboggan inside and lifted the Bull to a table near the stove. Raw brandy was poured liberally into the gaping mouth; mittens, parka, footgear, were stripped off. Then the Bull opened his eyes and tried to sit up.

"MacFarlane's—croaked," he gasped. "And—and so's his—his woman. And there—" he tried to turn his head toward the toboggan.

And then—then the end came.

Awed, the crowd looked at one another then back to the toboggan. Horny hands unstrapped the pile of bedded blankets; a bundle of rags was laid on a chair. And then, as if in answer to their wondering faces, came the low, weak wail of Allan MacFarlane, junior,—*the Prod*—a week old.

THE survival of the fittest is always a strong theme for the story teller. It is the theme which *Hapsburg Liebe* employs in THE JUNGLE'S ACCOLADE, a story you will read next month.

Nine men and a woman marooned on an island far outside the steamer lanes — that is the essence of the dramatic situation which Mr. Liebe develops in his usual entertaining fashion.

FAITH, HOPE AND JUSTICE

BY MARVIN LESLIE HAYWARD

Here is a study in rare birds, with the best slide showing a full length view of the attorney who holds no brief for charity, who never takes a case merely to get a fee, who never moves until sure that he has Justice on his side.

SUPPOSE you've been reading Gerald Hamilton's articles which we've been running since October last?" queried John Bland, the managing editor of the *Evening Advocate*, as he leaned back in his office chair. "I fancy they would be extremely interesting to a man of your unique mental makeup."

"Why unique?" queried Frazer MacKenzie, the "dilettante attorney," as his brother lawyers were pleased to call him.

"Are you not a member of the bar of this state in good and regular standing?" demanded the editor.

"I believe so."

"How many cases have you handled in the last year?"

"About half a dozen."

"How many have you refused to touch?"

"Legion—and then some."

"And why did you refuse them?" snapped Bland.

"Simply because I pledged myself the day I graduated from Stanvard that I'd never take a case unless my client had justice on his side," replied MacKenzie, "and by justice I mean not mere technical justice but actual moral righteousness —'that justice whose seat is the bosom of God and her voice the harmony of the world.'"

"And every one of those cases that you did stoop to take had been pronounced hopeless by some prominent lawyer in the city," averred Bland.

"I believe so," admitted MacKenzie. "My theory is that in the majority of cases a lawyer must obtain a square deal for his client not by applying the existing law or persuading a partisan jury, but by finding some loophole in the present law that lets his client out. My model is the great Daniel O'Connell, who declared that he could drive a coach and four through the most skilful statute ever passed by the English Parliament."

"And yet you say you are not unique," sighed the editor.

"Coming back to Hamilton," hedged the lawyer, "I haven't read his stuff and don't want to, for I've a pretty good idea of what it's like. Of course I don't blame you; you must give the people what they want or your circulation drops to the danger line; but you know it's simply the cheap claptrap of a shallow-pated un—"

"They're called the 'Fall—" interrupted Bland; but the telephone rang and he turned to answer it. There was the familiar buzzing of the wire, and Bland said, "Yes," in the bored tone of the busy man of affairs.

"Speak of the devil and he's sure to appear—or telephone," he flung at MacKenzie. "This is Hamilton's secretary on the wire now."

MacKenzie did not have time to reply. The wire buzzed again and Bland's face paled to a sickly white. His strong jaw sagged helplessly as he hung up the receiver and dropped back in the chair.

"Hamilton was murdered in his apartments at Omega Street, last night," he gasped.

"As I never permitted myself to know him I can't be disturbed by the news," declared MacKenzie, "but if his character's half as bad as his reputation the world's better off."

"Speak no ill of the dead."

"A dead rake's no better than a living one, except that his capacity for evil dies with him," retorted MacKenzie.

"But that's not all," groaned Bland. "His secretary found him alone with a knife wound in his breast. He named his murderer and died."

"Good newspaper copy, I think you call it," smiled MacKenzie.

Bland sprawled back in his chair and gazed at his legal friend in horrified dismay.

"But he named Blake R. Freeman," he gulped.

MacKenzie sprang to his feet. His nonchalance had dropped from him like a discarded coat.

"My roommate at Stanvard," he snapped.

"And one of the owners of this paper," was the whispered reply.

The telephone rang again and Bland reached out a trembling hand and took down the receiver.

"Yes," he said wearily. "Yes, he's here now."

He hung up the receiver and turned to MacKenzie.

"Freeman wants to see you right away down at the City Jail," he said.

"Poor old Blake," sighed the lawyer as he started for the door. "He was one of the best friends I ever had—soul of honor and all that sort of thing."

Bland rose from his chair, walked over to the door, and placed a trembling hand on MacKenzie's broad shoulder.

"Say, MacKenzie," he quavered, "if ever you twisted the law to produce justice, do it now. Go on quick, and—and—God bless you."

"I'm afraid you haven't profited by Hamilton's articles that you're using," was MacKenzie's parthian shot.

Half an hour later, he was admitted to Freeman's cell. The prisoner rose from the narrow cot, and the light fell on his lithe frame and haggard, care-lined face.

"I knew you'd come, old man," he exclaimed.

"Tell me all about it," urged MacKenzie.

"Oh, I know they've got me dead sure," replied Freeman. "Hamilton's 'dying declaration,' accusing me, is the very best evidence they could have. I'm lawyer enough to know that."

"But I'm the lawyer just now—tell me the facts," demanded MacKenzie.

"There's not much to tell," began Freeman. "Ten years ago I loved a woman—it was my first and only love affair. The memory of her has been—"

He stopped and gazed out the narrow window with the sinister horizontal bars. MacKenzie nodded understandingly.

"Then she met Hamilton, and I never saw her again."

"I understand," interrupted MacKenzie grimly.

"Last night she called on me and told me that since breaking off with Hamilton she had been living in a city up state, and living straight, too—that she was to marry a respectable, well-to-do business man up there, but didn't dare until she had got some letters that Hamilton had in his possession."

"And you went with her, Blake, for she didn't dare trust herself alone, and wouldn't take any third person into the affair but you," interrupted MacKenzie.

"Hamilton laughed at her—found out why she wanted the letters and threatened to send them to her future husband. In a fit of passion she seized an antique dagger from the wall and stabbed him."

"You hurried her away and Hamilton, with a sense of latent chivalry or malicious spite—God knows which—accused you and died."

"It's no wonder they say you can see farther into the other fellow's case than he can himself," exclaimed Freeman.

"Well?" interrogated MacKenzie.

"That's all I'll tell even you," declared Freeman. "I will not give you the woman's name nor where she lives. It's my life or her reputation."

"And I know you'll protect her. You always were stubborn as a mule," MacKenzie said as he gazed abstractedly at the signs on the opposite side of the street. His glance wandered up and down the tall buildings and rested on the glaring gilt announcement of Ingersoll & Payne, wholesale chemists and druggists.

"That's all the information I can give you," repeated Freeman, "and if you can't defend me and keep her name out of it why—"

MacKenzie's gaze flashed from the sign of the wholesale chemists and druggists back to the harried, stubborn face of the newspaper magnate.

"Really, you've given me a very full and complete statement of the case," MacKenzie assured him, "and I'll be glad to work out the defense along my own lines."

"Then I'll rest as easy as I can on a jail cot," smiled Freeman, "and I know that if human power can save me you'll do it."

"Thanks, old friend," said MacKenzie softly.

"I don't suppose it's any use to ask you what you think of my chances or what line of defense you'll adopt," suggested Freeman timidly. "I've read and heard enough of your methods to know that."

"It beats all," exclaimed MacKenzie, "the good law one can get from just reading the advertising signs with an open mind."

"Advertising signs?"

"Yes," smiled MacKenzie. "I once restored a $30,000 property to a deserving widow just by seeing an advertisement of 'marriage licenses and wedding rings.'"

"Time's up," announced the keeper gruffly as he swung open the cell door.

The trial of Blake R. Freeman for the murder of Gerald Hamilton was probably the greatest criminal trial the state had ever known, and special correspondents from all the big national dailies were on hand.

Roscoe Powell, the newly elected District Attorney, appeared for the people, and Frazer MacKenzie languidly announced that he appeared for the accused.

It had been expected that there would be the usual bitter and tedious fight over the selection of the jury; but MacKenzie lived up to his reputation as the most eccentric lawyer who ever drew a brief, and twelve "good men and true" were selected without a single objection on the part of the prisoner.

Then on the afternoon of the first day Powell called his first witness—Raymond Emmerson, Hamilton's private secretary.

"You knew the late Gerald Hamilton?" Powell began.

"I did."

"You were his private secretary?"

"I was."

"Describe briefly what you know of the circumstances surrounding his death," suggested Powell, with a triumphant glare at the jury.

"On the evening of the eleventh of October last, Mr. Hamilton and I were alone in his apartments comparing some literary material he was preparing for the press," began Emmerson.

"How long did you stay there?"

"I left about 8.30 to go to the public library to verify a quotation."

"And left Mr. Hamilton alone?"

"Yes."

"At what hour did you return?"

"A few minutes of ten."

"Who came with you?"

"Mr. Hayden, who has the adjoining apartments."

"What did you find?"

"I found Mr. Hamilton sitting in his chair with his head and shoulders on the desk. I raised him up and found that he had been stabbed in the breast."

Powell was approaching the crucial point of the case with the circumspection of the adroit legal strategist.

"Was Mr. Hayden with you?"

"Yes."

"Did the deceased make any statement to you?" Powell queried, and the jury, swayed by a common motive, leaned forward as one man.

"He did."

"What were his exact words?"

Powell was out to make a record for himself by convicting the wealthy and influential Blake R. Freeman as his first official act. The most pronounced laymen in the courtroom realized that this was the moment which spare writers delight in calling psychological, and the reporters scribbled away furiously, waiting for MacKenzie's strenuous objection to the question and the technical argument that was sure to follow.

MacKenzie made no move. He was sharpening his pencil with an air of careless unconcern, and Powell, after a scornful glance in MacKenzie's direction, repeated the question.

"He said," was the slow and careful reply, "'I'm dying—Blake Ra Freeman killed me.' When I came back from the telephone he was dead."

"That's all," announced Powell with a ring of triumph in his big bass voice.

MacKenzie rose calmly and began his cross-examination.

"What was the nature of the library work you were comparing with the deceased on the night in question?" he began.

"A series of articles for the Sunday section of the *Evening Advocate*," replied Emmerson.

"They had been dictated by Mr. Hamilton and typed by you I presume?"

"Yes."

"What was the general title of the articles you refer to?"

"'Fallacy of Faith.'"

MacKenzie handed the witness a copy of the *Advocate*.

"Is the article printed on page 16 of that paper one of the articles so dictated to you by Mr. Hamilton?" asked MacKenzie.

"It is," replied Emmerson as he handed back the paper.

"Now, Mr. Emmerson," continued MacKenzie, "I should like to call your attention to one paragraph of this article.

"'Faith is merely a survival of the collective superstitions of primitive man,' he read, 'and the prevalent belief in God is a proof of the limited range of the ordinary mind.'

"Did Mr. Hamilton dictate those sentences to you?"

"He did."

"How long have you been Mr. Hamilton's private secretary?"

"Ten years."

"Do you know whether those words represented Mr. Hamilton's personal views?"

"What's the use of going into this?" broke in Powell arrogantly. "Surely my learned friend doesn't imagine that the prisoner was justified in murdering the deceased on account of his private opinions."

Judge Blaisdell motioned Powell to his seat.

"If you object to the questions state your grounds—otherwise do not interrupt the cross-examination," he ordered.

MacKenzie repeated the question.

"Yes," hesitated the witness, "I have frequently heard him say there was no God or Supreme Being, and that only fools thought so."

"That is all," said MacKenzie, and the witness stepped down.

Powell then called Jasper Hayden, a prominent broker, who corroborated Emmerson's testimony and repeated Hamilton's dying statement accusing Freeman.

"That closes the case for the people," announced Powell confidently.

"The defense calls no witnesses," countered MacKenzie.

The evidence for the prosecution was absolutely unshaken and MacKenzie had practically admitted his defeat. Powell was the man of the moment; but the local reporters waited eagerly for the next move.

"Have you anything to say, Mr. MacKenzie?" queried the judge carelessly.

"Merely this, Your Honor," began MacKenzie, "that the only evidence against the prisoner in this case is the dying declaration of the deceased accusing the prisoner of having murdered him."

"That's very evident," agreed Judge Blaisdell, and Powell grinned openly at the jury.

"Now," MacKenzie went on, "a dying declaration—although not made under oath—may be given in evidence in court the same as a sworn statement, on the ground that the statements are made under a sense of impending death, which imposes upon the conscience of the party making the statement as great an inducement to speak the truth as an oath administered in a court of law."

"Nobody disputes that for a moment, Mr. MacKenzie," interrupted the judge testily.

"Now," continued MacKenzie calmly, "there can be no doubt that Hamilton's

statement was made under a sense of impending death, for his first words were, 'I am dying.'"

"That's just the argument I was going to make," sneered Powell.

"Then I think even my learned friend will admit," retorted MacKenzie, "that if a party is not competent to give evidence in court under oath, his dying declaration cannot be given in evidence for the same reason. For instance, if a party is so insane that he cannot testify in court under oath, then his dying declaration would be rejected."

Powell was smiling patronizingly at the reporters whose accounts of the trial would send his stock skyward; but Judge Blaisdell leaned forward, a keen look on his thin, pale face, and MacKenzie turned to the district attorney with a cheerful smile.

"It is also very elementary law," he went on, "that no witness is competent to give evidence in court who does not believe in a supreme being, and it follows that if a party does not so believe, then his dying declaration must be excluded. In this case the evidence of Emmerson, Mr. Hamilton's secretary, shows that Mr. Hamilton was a pronounced infidel and devoid of all religious belief, and therefore his dying declaration is inadmissible. I would ask the court to direct the jury to disregard all the evidence on that point."

MacKenzie sat down and went on sharpening his pencil. One of the local reporters slapped a visitor on the back and said, "I told you so." The jury gazed in vacant bewilderment and Powell leaned against the table, his big hands sprawled uncertainly on its surface.

"Have you any authorities to sustain that argument?" queried Judge Blaisdell calmly.

MacKenzie handed up a number of stout volumes, and went on, reading from some scribbled notes on the back of a used envelope:

"In the case of the State *vs.* Ah Lee reported in 8 Oregon Reports, 214, the Court said, 'Under the Common Law, one who does not believe in the existence of a supreme being who will punish false swearing in a future world is incompetent to testify, and consequently the dying declaration of such a one would not be admissible in evidence under the common law.' The same rule has been laid down by the Courts of California, Iowa, Mississippi, West Virginia and other states. See the whole point fully treated in 16 Annotated Cases, page 148."

MacKenzie sat down and tore up the envelope. Powell still leaned against the table in a state of mental paralysis, and the judge closed the book he was reading and turned to the jury.

"Under the law as brought to my attention by Mr. MacKenzie," he said, "I must instruct you, gentlemen, to disregard altogether the evidence of the dying declarations of the deceased, and, as that is the only evidence implicating the prisoner in any way, there will, of course, be a verdict of 'not guilty.'"

Several days later Freeman came into MacKenzie's office for the first time since the trial.

"Are you making up my bill? Be sure to make it big enough," he bantered.

MacKenzie pointed to a paragraph in the newspaper he had been reading.

"No," he smiled, "I was just reading the wedding announcement of the 'woman in the case.'"

Freeman glanced at the paper and sank into a chair.

"And you knew who she was all the time?" he faltered.

"Sure. She called on me the day after the murder, told me the whole story, and insisted on going on the stand and clearing you. I staved her off by assuring her that Hamilton's 'Fallacy of Faith' articles would do the trick without bringing her into it at all."

NEXT month: THE LAW OF THE ABALONE, a story of the shell-hunters of the Pacific.

GOD'S HALF ACRE

BY G. B. BUCHANAN

The poetry of C Troop's poet laureate was not so good as newspaper vers libre nor so bad as advertising limericks. It would have passed if a highbrow from Harvard hadn't pointed out its defects and made the poet feel as if he had been "opened by the censor."

In Gugu-land the Dato-man lay snoozin' by his door;
He was dreamin' of a vision like he'd never saw before—
'Twas a beauchus Red-Cross Dame, come from the U. S. A.
To nurse the poor soldado boys the Gugus put away.

JACK MONHOAN, C Troop's poet laureate, paused in the rendition of his latest contribution to the long and suffering annals of versification and eyed the circle of C troopers squatting about the steaming coffee pots expectantly. What he saw pleased him; his hearers sat spellbound.

"Say," breathed Corporal Dan Adams, "that's poetry! When I hear them ringing words I feel my ego go bust inside me, just same as if a bullet with the sign of a cross carved on its snout has cracked into me. I feel my soul set free and with one or two bounds going sailing, sailing, sailing across the big drink to God's country. Almost I wish—but no! I belong right here in the army and 'whither thou goest I will go' is my creed. Sing some more, poet looray."

The poet, however, had the poetical temperament and could not woo the muse effectively without the harmonious support of all present; the frown upon the long face of "Foureyes" Fitshugh, the troop rookie, damped Monhoan's versifying ardor. The corporal noticed Monhoan's questioning glance.

"It ain't healthy," Adams began darkly, "for a low-down, no-account rookie to have opinions different from the unanimous consent of his troop. Have you got earache, or what?"

"As verse—of a topical order, perhaps," Foureyes boldly stated, with the authority of an ex-editor of the *Lampoon*, "it passes. Poetry? No!"

"Oh!" retorted Adams. "This camp is hot enough now without tropical poetry. What's the reason it ain't arctic poetry, you Foureyes?"

"I haven't scanned it fully yet," admitted Fitshugh, "but off-hand I should say it hasn't feet enough."

"Feet!"

"Precisely."

"Do you mean to tell me that in addition to there being tropical and arctic poetry there is also foot poetry? Maybe then there is hoss poetry—"

"And maybe there is sea poetry, too," suggested an ex-marine.

"You do not understand, I fear. This term 'foot' in poetry does not mean the same as foot in the army—as a 'foot soldier.'"

"Thank God," murmured the quartermaster sergeant, who had to fight for footwear.

"No, the poetical feet do not wear shoes," Foureyes went on. "It is a figurative term." He went on to elucidate his meaning, and by the time the coffee boiled, Corporal Adams had learned some interesting things he had never suspected lurked in poetry.

"Then," he suddenly demanded, "if you say this here poetry hasn't got feet enough, and this is the best this guy Monhoan has given us since his ode to the demise of Sandy Lukey, who hit the eternal hay down in Mindonati Jungle, what would you call the rest of the stuff? You

Monhoan, what you got to say about this short footage?"

"Go chase yourself," Monhoan retorted angrily. "Who ever heard of feet in poetry? I don't believe it! This poetry of mine is all right, and if—"

"Say no more," thundered Adams. "You've been showed up for the short footage guy you are. Foureyes, here, went to Harvard, which can be forgiven—but I guess he knows. You will now relocate them stanzas in the arctic rather than in the torrid zone, and put in plenty of feet."

Monhoan swore disdainfully, and studied the bubbling soup being prepared from water and the emergency ration.

"Give you three minutes," the corporal warned. "This troop has honored you with its commission of poet looray too long to feel kindly disposed to these here bum footings."

"You go to a hotter place than the tropics."

"Well, boys," Adams suggested judiciously, "what's the penalty for short footage?"

"Sit on a saber," suggested Foureyes, remembering his rookie experiences.

"Fine! Well, after grub, fellows, unless this short foot man ponies up the footage he's cheated us out of these many days, we'll inflict the penalty hereby pronounced. Grub's done. Come on and swill."

The commissary detail having cleared away the pots and kettles, and the smudge bowls lighted, Corporal Adams introduced Monhoan to a seat upon the point of a saber. Monhoan fought desperately, but willing hands overpowered him, and to his curses the others inexorably demanded, "Feet, feet, feet!" Of course, as every poet knows, poetry cannot be devised under such harrowing surroundings. Besides, Monhoan didn't care if he didn't, and told his tormentors so in language more forceful than even a horse soldier customarily employs. Whereupon, the hubbub kicked up brought the guard officer and, being in the enemy's country, quiet was restored. Still snarling and defiant, Monhoan was released. Shortly they spread their blankets. Monhoan retired with the jibes of his comrades still assailing his ears.

And way along in the night Foureyes wakened to find a fist prodding his ribs.

"Don't yell," hissed a voice, "it's Monhoan, the poet looray. I just wanted to tell you that if you think you're smart just because you went to Harvard, and can make fun of my poetry"—Foureyes detected a sob in the word "poetry"—"you're mighty damned much mistaken. Maybe you think your going to Harvard puts it high and mighty over a feller that never had any chance to go to school. Well, I don't object. But I do object to having my poetry made fun of and I tell you straight, Mr. Smart Aleck from Harvard, I'm going to pay you for this dirty trick you done me tonight."

Foureyes marveled at the man's vehemence. Monhoan spoke as a man who had had something precious defiled.

"Oh, I say," said Foureyes kindly, "it was all fun. Can't you take a joke?"

"Yah," sobbed the other, and splashed something from his eyes which fell warmly limpid upon Fitshugh's up-turned face. "Go on and apologize you—you snake! That's always your play. You smart aleck have your fun—and apologize. Do you know what your apology is worth? I never had no chance to go to school—I—I—by God, man, you'll pay for this sometime!"

Monhoan slipped quietly across the bundled ponchos. Foureyes started up, but thought better of arousing the camp. He lay awake an hour, puzzling. Yes, there must be some deep sentiment underlying Monhoan's poetical efforts. He sensed an idol whose breaking meant a wounded heart. Naturally kind-hearted, Fitshugh had a bad attack of compassion. Next morning he collared Monhoan and again apologized. The trooper only stared malevolently, gasping, "Fun! fun—that's always your game—fun for you—hell for the other—"

"But man—"

"Go to the devil," Monhoan snarled fiercely, "and if you ever say 'fun' to me again I'll—I'll kill you!"

Foureyes was amused at Monhoan's

outburst, as one may be amused at the sobbing threat of a child; but he could not escape the fierce passion glinting in the boy's gray eyes. They were dreamy eyes. There hovered in them the perpetual questioning of a youth, yet with the deeper note of a mature idealist. Foureyes remembered Monhoan's sobbing, "I never had no chance to go to school!" He wondered a little what those eyes of a child and a dreamer and an idealist would have found had they gone to school—for instance, had they had the schooling he himself had had. Foureyes had written much verse, now and then a gleam of poetry, himself. And suddenly he saw into Monhoan's heart. The soul and heart of a true poet stared at him from the trooper's burning eyes. "Lord," he thought, sadly, "and I made fun of such a man's verse. He never had any schooling but in his heart the song is forever singing. It's meat and drink to him. I bet money he never had an honest-to-God sweetheart in his life. His love is his poetry—and I made fun of that!" Foureyes shuddered. He respected tragedy.

"Well, old man," he said, kindly, "I begin to understand. I'm sorry. I suppose it doesn't mean much—to say that—but if I can help you any time—"

"Thank you." The trooper turned on his heel and marched off toward the picket line, along which the mounts were tethered, head high, shoulders squared.

Foureyes watched Monhoan caressing his horse, then sighed and turned away. "Gee," he mused, "if I had that boy's soul on top of my schooling, I'd burn the *Atlantic Monthly* up."

Raulliane, the mixed Spanish-Chinese-Pulajan blackleg who led the small army of marauders that Troop C had been sent to subdue, possessed, like Monhoan, genius in the rough. His unbaked skill centered in military strategy. Graduate West Pointers grumblingly admitted that with a first year course in tactics Raulliane would have been a sinister menace. There were those who secretly harbored the view that the Constabulary commander who had refused Raulliane a commission in the Island police had seriously erred; inexorable tradition forbade this simple process of eliminating the threat he then subtly made. All Raulliane wanted was to soldier in high commands. The panoply of the American soldado had appealed to his fancy. Refused this desire, he drowned his sorrows in vino—and broke loose.

First a batallion of Constabulary went for him—a batallion which returned *a la carte*, a head now, a foot wrapped up in palm leaves and labeled "pig," two arms tied to the horns of a carabao, or a torso in a rice sack; all of which infuriated the Constabulary and enlisted orders to bring Raulliane in on the hoof and be suitably hung, if it took all the Constabulary in Pinoslos district. It pretty nearly did—and still Raulliane infested the mountains, gathering recruits through his prestige due to victorious encounters with the hard-used police.

Then came the regular army's turn, and Taps sounded over vacant ponchos with sickening regularity. They sent A Company of the Ninth Regiment foot soldiers. Raulliane himself, disguised as an old, old padrone, engaged himself to the dapper West Pointer in command, as guide. He guided A Company into the jungle with sixty men. And up in the foothills above Pinos, the ancient padrone betook himself to other parts under cover of darkness.

Just at daybreak a wicked, enfilading fire from Krags and Mausers, shooting bullets upon which the sign of the cross had been cut, mowed down forty-two of the A Company men. After that a daily commerce in portions of American soldados set up with the army post at Pinos. Sentries stepping through the dark would stumble upon a wrinkled head, its ears crushed off, its eyes gouged out, its tongue slit to ribbons. Or it might be the legginged calf and horse-hide booted foot of an A Company man.

In order to punish the perpetrator of these atrocities they outfitted an expedition of picked campaigners. It included C Troop of cavalry, Companies B, D, and I, of the Ninth Foot soldiers, and a mule

battery of quick firers, together with one three-inch gun for use in case Raulliane entrenched himself.

The expedition moved out of Pinos with the band playing that classic departure hymn—"The Girl I Left Behind Me."

Maybe Foureyes remembered Amy, as C Troop proudly rode through the heavy gate posts and faced down the four miles of hard white military road which had been built north of Pinos. But for Monhoan there was no girl left behind; yet it was an inspiring moment. Romance cantered at his saddle horn; he mentally shed his khaki service kit and assumed the ponderous, silvered armor of Sir Galahad or Ivanhoe. There had been food for his idealism hunger and a song in the stirring chronicles of Scott and Tennyson which he had found in the army post libraries. He did not heed the blaring band because the only love he had ever known centered in the long rhythm of romance eternally flowing through his brain.

They camped beside the Noya in the foothills the first night. Monhoan sat upon the saber and hissed his passionate wrath into Foureyes' astonished ears.

Next morning C Troop deployed northward on scout duty and before night had struck the bandit's train. For two days the expedition toiled through the jungle, hacking a way for the quick-firers and three-inch piece with machete and axe. Troop C scouted constantly and on the third day found itself in two sections. Monhoan, Foureyes and Corporal Adams with thirty-odd men, had ridden up into a suspicious looking canyon. The rest had gone westward—and had not returned. The explorers made camp in the canyon. Monhoan reported for supper, then vanished. He had vanished nightly these last few nights, going out into the jungle, to remain till the bugle sounded retreat. He always carried his carbine with him,—a knight never laid off his lance until his good right arm failed.

The camp was quieting down. Soon the bugle would call softly to the wings of slumber. Far in the distance toward the west they heard a faint rattle, like a volley of government 30-30's. "Just our luck;" the corporal swore helplessly. "Either the foot soldiers or McCabe and the rest of Troop C have bumped into the scullions over there. Well, first thing in the morning we bust down through this place as fast as hell for teather'll take us."

Adams was bending over preparatory to resuming his seat upon the saddle he had placed upon the ground, when suddenly a shriek rose from the patch of jungle ahead of them, and a Krag crashed. Adams fell with a dum-dum through his thighs. In a moment pandimonium broke loose. To the front and right the jungle resounded with yells and spitting guns. The troopers coolly secured their guns and fired in the direction of the flaring flashes that came from the black jungle when the brown men fired. Foureyes squatted beside Adams and yelled the orders that the fast dying corporal whispered. The fire in front gradually lessened, then suddenly a single shot rang in the rear, right behind Foureyes, and he felt a numbing crash in his body. "Corp," he gasped, "they've surrounded us!"

"About face and give 'em hell," Adams shouted. The troopers swung and fired a volley into the blackness behind their positon. It was repeated; then, as no more shots came from that direction, they turned back and combed the brush ahead. As suddenly as it had begun, the firing ceased.

With the coming of daylight, the remainder of the troop crashed through the jungle, routing the bandits as they went. They gathered up the wounded and the dead: Adams, who died just before dawn, and four troopers, whose khaki would never again move to the swing of trained muscles, and strapped them upon horses. Such of the wounded as could ride climbed up behind a comrade. Foureyes and the others who were seriously injured were laid on improvised stretchers.

Out in the jungle, to the rear of their position, they found Monhoan, moaning in a pool of blood, his empty carbine beside him. Carefully they lifted him and placed him with the wounded.

So the punitive expedition continued its

little task, while the grain which had fallen before the giant harvester there in the gloom of the jungle, was garnered in the cool, white painted post hospital at Pinos.

Monhoan and Foureyes were laid on adjoining cots, because each had C Troop insignias upon their collars; and Angel Minerva, with the red cross of mercy on her sleeve, smoothed their foreheads and gave them cooling fluids. The Major Doctor looked sadly at them. He shook his head at Monhoan, and the boy knew that never again would he lie out in the jungle in the moonlight and dream of Launcelot and Sir Galahad and Lady Elaine. Then he looked up into Minerva's soft blue eyes, and there came to him a feeling that after all Sir Galahad and Lady Elaine were dead; but Minerva was alive, a tangible bit of womanhood, and he knew, somehow, Minerva was taking the place in his heart which poetry had so long held. And above all, he knew that he was dying.

Pain racked his torn and bruised body and he bit his lips to stifle the moans. Presently they gave him drugs and he suffered less. Then he took notice of his surroundings. He saw Foureyes in the next cot, while Angel Minerva stood over him stroking his hair as the Major Doctor's kindly but hurried fingers gouged raw nerves in Fitshugh's wounds. Monhoan felt a wave of jealousy; moreover, he saw that Foureyes had been shot in the back. He remembered a night, so dreamily far away it seemed now, when he had cursed men who were holding him upon a saber point and raucously urging "Feet, feet, feet!" He remembered that he hated this man in the next cot with all the hatred of his being. Now Angel Minerva petted him—and he had been shot in the back.

"Well, Mr. Smart Aleck from Harvard," Monhoan presently remarked, in a faint voice, "I see you've got showed up for what you are—like your crowd always does. You've got yellow in you somewhere. You wouldn't be a smart aleck if you hadn't. Here Minerva, don't touch that man again, he's a coward."

Foureyes rolled his head and stared at his neighbor. He saw that he lay next to Monhoan. "Coward!" he said. "Monhoan, what do you mean?"

"I mean I've showed you up. You got shot in the back."

"Well?"

"I suppose, if pressed," Monhoan pursued coldly, "you'd say your side arm got overheated in the furore of the action and shot you from spontaneous combustion. Or, perchance, when you went to Harvard, where they teach the mysteries of 'feet,' they may have taught you to shoot service side arms with your toes. Sir, I charge you with cowardice. You wouldn't have been shot in the back if you had been facing the enemy."

The Major Doctor had ceased his examination and gazed curiously at Monhoan, then back at Foureyes' pale face. Minerva stood motionless beside him, her cool, white hand upon the trooper's forehead; but Monhoan noted with infinite satisfaction that her smile had turned more distant and cold.

"Ah, but I wasn't running," Fitshugh cried. "I was right beside Adams. He got hit bad and I was taking the orders he whispered to me and passing them on to the men. Then there was one shot, a single shot, from the rear. It plugged me square in the hip. I told Adams and he ordered a volley to the rear. We heard no more shooting from that point, and finally about-faced and combed the brush ahead. If Adams were living he'd tell you. Why, I couldn't run."

"Very plausible," cut in Monhoan weakly. "Does credit to an ex-editor of the celebrated *Lam-Lampoon*. Maybe you used to write fiction. I simply want to ask you, Major, sir, what sense there is in a single shot coming from behind, and that single shot singling out a certain party and going into his hip? Is it war or is it a love story?" Monhoan's voice rose to a gasping shriek. "I told you, man, I'd pay you back."

Suddenly an inspiration came to Fitzhugh. He half raised and shook his fist at Monhoan's passion-constricted face. "You traitor!" he thundered. "I see it all

now. They found you off by yourself. You sneaked up behind me, your-comrade-in-arms, singled me out from the whole bunch and shot me down in cold blood. You damned traitor—traitor, traitor!"

Foureyes continued to roar the baleful word. Monhoan eyed him blankly a moment, then seemed to realize that somehow his revenge had been a boomerang. "My God!" he gasped and turned his head. "I didn't—honest to God I didn't."

Foureyes shook off the nurse's restraining hand and bellowed a contradiction. The Major Doctor brought quiet by a curt command. "Men," he said grimly, "these are serious charges both of you make. Let's have your stories. Monhoan, you started it. What have you got to say?"

It was little enough, and had already been said—that a knight faced the enemy until he laid his heels lifeless upon the field. And Fitshugh had been shot in the back. And a knight never lied either. There had been other shots from behind, —he himself had fired his carbine as long as it held bullets,—then they had boloed him—the little brown men. There was something else—he could not remember—but he hadn't—he hadn't shot Fitshugh.

"He has been boloed," the Major Doctor mused. "You're positive, Fitshugh, there was but one shot from the rear?"

"I heard no others."

"Well, what's your version?"

Foureyes settled back. His glance strayed upward till it centered upon the inscrutable blue eyes of Angel Minerva. He told his story simply. The Major Doctor wiped his glasses before he spoke. Then, judicially, "Well, I'm no judge of poetry, but I may say that whether that's good verse or bum verse, it's a little thing to get sore at a comrade for—perhaps shoot him in the back in action."

"I didn't," Monhoan protested. "But I *was* mad at him. You would be too, if you were like me. I never had no schooling, but I been reading and making up things like that always. I guess I'm bughouse over it. It was like a sweetheart to me—and this smart aleck laughed at it. What would you do if a feller laughed at your wife because she never had been to a Harvard dance,—what would you?"

"Whether or not I'd knock his block off is not a question—but I'd do it fair and in the open and not sneak up behind him in action and shoot him in the back."

"But I didn't, I tell you," Monhoan gasped, and blood drops flecked his drawn lips.

"It will all have to be investigated," replied the Major Doctor. "Neither of you is in a fit condition to state exactly what happened. Nurse, do everything possible for these men. I will have the investigation proceeded upon as speedily as possible and if either of them is —guilty—we've got to patch him up enough to take his medicine. One of them may be a coward—which will bobtail him out of the service. One may be a traitor —which will bobtail him into eternity. Keep them living.

The Major Doctor moved away, and two pairs of eyes, gleaming with suffering and fever, stared passionately at Minerva.

"I didn't do it, honest," gasped Monhoan.

"I wasn't running either," begged Foureyes.

"There, there," Minerva soothed gently, but both noticed that she spoke mechanically and omitted the "Soldier Boy," she had added to her soothing "there's" before.

Then began a concerted effort to patch them up so they could "take their medicine." Couriers were dispatched to the remnant of C Troop, fighting up in the Finangaro Mountains. But they saw that in Monhoan's case the ten hours necessary for even the most expeditious horsemen to reach C Troop and back would be too long. Minerva tried to cheer him, but somehow, she could not bring to her ministrations the sincerity which would show Monhoan that she thought of him as a true soldier. His mind wandered at times, but when the mist cleared away, ever his soul sank into the black depths of despair. He was a knight without honor—whose lady disbelieved.

The sun climbed higher. Its rays sought the windows and shone kindly in upon the white cots. Minerva drew the blinds.

She saw Monhoan's fever-bright eyes fastened upon her. She came to his side.

"Was there something you wanted?" she asked, gently, and brushed the dark, curly locks from his forehead, streaked with the sweat of pain.

Monhoan tried to smile. "Yes," he nodded; "I want you to—believe me. Honest—I didn't do it. And I would like—like to see my candle—snuffed out knowing—that—that you believed me—because I guess—I—" he paused, his breath whistling through tautened nostrils. Then vaguely the vision of Sir Galahad, of ancient warriors and brave kings, hovered before his closed eyes. He felt strengthened. "Methinks, My Lady," he suddenly spoke up strongly, "I fain would lay my heart at thy feet."

He lay very still. Blood oozed between his lips and trickled across his white chin. Minerva gently wiped it away. She could not control the tears which came to her eyes. The touch of her hand roused the soldier, and, looking up, he saw that she was crying. "Oh, I'm so sorry," she sobbed.

"Why," he said, "do you mean—that you are sorry—I said that—or that I—I am going—you know—"

Minerva did not reply. As never before she rebelled against this chimerical glory called war. She did not know that she cared sentimentally for Monhoan; but he was a good boy, with a heart and soul—the capacity sometime, somewhere, to make a woman happy. And his life was being taken from him in the same way she had seen so many taken. He was giving his all for the glory of his flag.

"Thank you, sonny," she murmured, "I appreciate it—and I'm sorry you've got to die—like—like this, anyway."

"Yes—like this,—under a cloud." Monhoan shuddered. "Who was it—do you remember—Rowena—or the Lady of the Lake—or Thelma—who told her knight—who was under a cloud—to cast himself into the sea? And I would—if I could—and I were guilty. But I'm not—I never shot that man."

Minerva quieted him. But she did not call him "Soldier Boy," and Monhoan knew he was still under a cloud.

Through the open windows the crack of a muleteer's whip punctuated the lazy quietude of the calm air. Foureyes, nearest the window, looked out. Below, on the hard white military road, an ambulance train wound rumblingly toward the building. Minerva hurried below. Fitshugh saw the Hospital Corps men carry two Ninth Regiment men from the first wagon; he glimpsed a lean, seamed brown face, on a white stretcher. Foureyes looked closer; yes, there was no doubt about it; it was Raulliane!

"Hey," he called gleefully, "you Troop C men and Ninth Regiment men and Constabulary, they got the fox at last. And presently, if he don't croak, you fellows and your comrades, who've gone to glory hunting him, will be avenged. Do you hear, Monhoan? Raulliane will never ambush another command."

"And what consolation—is that when—I got to be called a—traitor?" The injustice of it assailed him. "Oh," he sobbed childishly, "it's all your fault—if you hadn't gone—and made fun—of my poetry."

"For heaven's sake, boy, why can't you take my word for it? It was all a joke."

"For the same reason," Monhoan replied, "that you can't believe I didn't shoot you."

"Oh!" Then, "Well, old man, it's a sorry mixup all around. You're dying. I guess I'll live. And if it'll do any good I'll gladly believe you didn't—or if you did, I'll forgive you. It was all my fault. I should have seen your seriousness in your eyes, Monhoan, it can be seen. Let's forgive and part friends."

"So far as you and I are concerned—all right—but a knight—Foureyes—would help a brother knight—out. There's the rest—Minerva—will they believe?"

"I do not know."

There was silence for awhile. Presently a volley sounded from the direction of a palm-decked post cemetery down near the shore of the bay. A bugle call echoed; rising, falling, they heard the most ma-

jestic melody in the Regulation Bugler—"Taps." They were burying the remnants of Sandy Lukey, a Ninth Regiment foot soldier who had paid his last toll to Old Glory down in Mindonati Jungle and which had come home that morning with Raulliane's compliments. Now the shriveled relics, wrapped in a new service coat, were being laid away there beneath the nodding palms. They fired the three rounds blank and sounded Taps—it was a knight's ritual. And Monhoan felt a sudden clutching fear that it would not be granted him.

Oh, hear the bugle calling, calling,
Follow it, follow it, home!

He fancied the bugle calling to his soul; he wanted to know that his grave, however rude, would be unblackened by the brooding epitaph above it, "Here lies a traitor." And he wasn't;—if they would only believe.

"Say," Monhoan gasped weakly, "do you mean—that about—friends?"

"Sure."

"Like knights—like Ivanhoe or—Sir Galahad?"

"Yes," curiously.

"Then you got to help me—I didn't do it—you say you believe I didn't—the rest won't—unless there was—no reason for—me to be—accused.

"Yes?"

"You got—to say—you were running."

"What! Admit I was a coward? Why, that'd bobtail me out of the service."

"And which is worse—a live coward or—to die—a traitor?"

"I see. Give me a little time to think."

"Time! Man—I'm dying."

The Spirit of Romance hovered low, folded her wings and nestled upon Fitshugh's cot. The trooper reached over. "I'll do it, Monhoan," he said, gravely. "It's mostly my fault. I'll do what I can."

"You are—a knight." Monhoan tried to reach out his hand, but his strength was ebbing. "I thank you—and if I were king I would—knight you—Sir—Sir Foureyes of Harvard!"

"Thanks, old man." There were some new lines in Fitshugh's face.

Minerva, closely followed by the Major Doctor, suddenly rushed into the room. Fitshugh held up his hand as they started to speak. "I have a confession to make," he said, slowly. "I was running. I'm a coward. Monhoan here is no traitor."

Minerva knelt quickly between the two cots and buried her face beside Monhoan's but one hand reached over and nestled in one of Fitshugh's. The Major Doctor polished his glasses carefully. "And why," he said, solemnly, "do you say that? Do you know it will bobtail you out of the service?"

"Yes, sir. I say it because it is,—Monhoan here, must not die under a cloud."

"Youth, oh youth," murmured the old doctor. "Brave, noble, quixotic fools! Why, you chump, do you know that your little scheme would not hold milk in an investigation?"

"But Major, please—this boy here—"

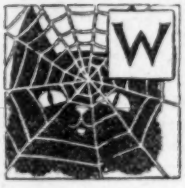
"Yes, this boy here—" the old doctor's tired eyes smiled, his hands clasped over his stomach, "this boy here is booked for one of the rarest honor medals in this world—the one from Congress. Do you know what Raulliane is doing down below? He's cursing the twenty-seven saints of his religion for this boy's true aim. But for this boy here, Troop C would have been annihilated—shared the fate of A Company of the Ninth foot soldiers. You didn't listen well that night—or, rather, your own volley drowned other firing. Raulliane had prepared a neat ambush. He had surrounded you. His shot was to be a signal. He picked out the commanding officer—which was you, Adams being down. Then, Holy Christopher, hell in the shape of a trooper's carbine broke out right next door, so to speak. Well, when Monhoan had shot himself dry, they boloed him—but the chance for an ambush vanished when Monhoan's surprise party crippled Raulliane. His men carried him off but the boys got him next day.....but he'll never wear it—the boy'll never wear his medal."

Monhoan was lying motionless, his face glorified; he visioned his knights, King Arthur and Sir Galahad, welcoming him to glory, and he smiled.

THE SMILE OF JOSS

BY WILLIAM J. NEIDIG

In a piece of red paper, like a laundry check, which floated to his feet out of the night, Sam Wren, the reformer, recognized the warning—Danger—Run Slowly. Sam immediately shut off his gas and coasted out of the spotlight and into the shadows.



HEN he had washed the dishes, Sam Wren threw off his white apron, drew on his surtout, and went down town. Not to the joss house nor the theatre nor Li Hung Ching's tan game. No! Sam was not such a heathen. Instead, he headed straight for the mission, where there was to be an entertainment that evening.

Sam was walking quietly along, looking neither to the right nor the left, when a bit of red paper fluttered to his feet. The paper contained his name, with the legend "Look out for Ah Fat!" in Chinese. When you find a piece of red paper in the street in Chinatown with your name on it, and the legend "Look out!" in Chinese, it means that you've been doing something that someone doesn't like. It means that someone has given your name to the devil. Red paper stands for devil. "Ah Fat" stands for—well, Sam Wren knew who Ah Fat was. The warning was evidently from a friend.

One would think that a Chinaman with a good conscience would not be looking back over his shoulder every few rods to see if he were being followed by the Great Black Bogie; that is, a mission Chinaman, who didn't believe in black bogies, and didn't care a tea-leaf whether the devil's eye had a cinder in it from his sandalwood incense or not.

Sam was nearing his journey's end, and nothing had happened. When he had passed the next dark alleyway he would be all right. That's as close as devils ever get to the mission. It was lighter across the street. Sam thought he would cross the street before he got to the dark alleyway. Besides, walking was easier across the street.

Sam crossed the street. He came opposite the dark alleyway. He was almost past its menace, when suddenly there was a little cough of fire from the very center of the darkest place of all. Ping! went a bullet, smash against the fence. Another shot, and another. Ping! Ping! The bullets followed him, and he thought he was gone. He made a dash for the mission. Ping! The last bullet stuck in the door-jamb as he burst open the door of his haven. Confucius! but it was a close shave!

Sam Wren knew a thing or two—that he did not learn at the mission—about devils. He knew perfectly well which of the Suey Sing hatchet-boys it was that had shot so wretchedly. Useless knowledge! Ah Fat was a poor shot; that was true. But he could use a knife beautifully. And he was patient; if he did not get his Chinaman this time he would get him the next. And he was experienced; one corner of the graveyard belonged to him. And he was sly; he had never yet been caught at his mischief. And he was not alone; the Suey Sing Tong was behind him. Ah Fat was the most desperate highbinder in the Suey Sings. Indeed, they had but three. The Suey Sings were a little short on highbinders. Ah Fat and Luy Ling and Luy Kam constituted the entire force. Three men had stepped out from the alleyway. Sam Wren knew who they were.

It doesn't pay to stick your nose in other people's business. It doesn't pay to stand in with the reform work, and help tear low-browed slave girls from their purchasers. You are liable to get hurt.

if you happen to be a Chinaman yourself.

Sam slammed the door of the mission, and ran squealing to the men's quarters. He threw himself upon a bunk and drew the covers over his head. His breath came in gasps. He lay shuddering and cowering, and muttered strange words between his chattering teeth. These reformers carried a thing too far. He had never intended to antagonize the entire Suey Sing Tong. Too late! He was as good as dead! All the lady reformers in this world couldn't save him now!

Nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, midnight. One by one the mission boys had gone to bed. The house was as quiet as the dead earth. Every Chinaman was in his bunk, and every Chinaman was asleep —every one save only Sam Wren. Sam Wren lay like a corpse, with his face to the wall and the blankets drawn over his head. There was not the slightest pulse of blood in his body. It was a terrible thing to have the hatchet-boys after one.

King, the mission housekeeper, before kicking off his embroidered holiday slippers, had stuck three or four pieces of sandalwood punk in a flower-pot, and lighted them. It was not a superstition; although, indeed, there is nothing like sandalwood punk for scattering devils. No. It was merely that he liked the fragrance of the burning incense. After a time the room became sweet and pleasant, and lost the disagreeable laundry smell that somehow hangs about a Chinaman's lodgings, unless something is burned to drive it away.

One o'clock, two o'clock. The air was heavy with smoke, and the punk-sticks had at last been consumed by the gnawing glow-worm that will eat straight into the heart of a devil if he comes too close. Sam was still awake, shuddering beneath his blanket. Suddenly he sniffed. It was the incense from the burning sandalwood that penetrated to his nostrils. Sweet and pungent, it carried him back a thousand years, to when he was young, to when he kneeled prostrate before his joss and took the oath of the Sam Yups and had no fear in his heart. Now he was no longer a heathen, and was afraid. Why was he afraid now, and not then? Perhaps it was because of his enemies. Perhaps it was because Joss stood in with you, if you burned enough paper devils before him, when you had enemies that you wanted to kill. The mission ladies wouldn't let you kill your enemies. It was pretty bad when you couldn't kill your enemies, and they were after you with pistols and knives and sand-bags. Joss, of course, was a wicked old heathen god, but he let you kill your enemies.

Two o'clock and fifteen minutes. The Sam Yups kept their joss-house open all night, because you never could tell when you were going to need a joss-house. Sam Wren softly crept out of his bunk and slipped on his shoes. Then, with infinite patience, he unbolted the back door, felt his way down the back stairway, and lost himself in the blackness of the street. He knew that there was a hatchet-boy in the black alleyway, because the Suey Sings never let up on a man once they started in, and so he was very careful, and kept away from the hatchet-boy. At last he arrived at the joss-house, and the sleepy old sentinel passed him through the tortuous, smoky corridors into the presence of Joss himself. He bought of the old man some punk, and some red papers that represented the different orders of devils.

Sam burned his incense in the way prescribed by his tong ancestors. It was very simple. First he lighted two punk sticks, one for each hand, and held them before the face of Joss, his eyes on the ground. Then he bent forward and pressed his forehead against the sacred mat, holding his punk sticks so that the feet of Joss were shrouded in smoke. Then he chanted the sacred lines of his tong, having care to use only the mandarin dialect. When the chant was ended he withdrew backward, bending low his forehead thrice three times toward the floor. Now, with face averted, he arose. He turned with his back toward Joss. The old priest, with much ceremony, gave over to his keeping the red paper devils which he was to burn, and he lighted them, one after another, until they were all consumed. No tiniest fragment must escape the flame. If one

should get away with his wings singed, or if a fragment of one should not be burned, that devil would take up his residence in Sam Wren's house. Nobody ever lets a devil get away from him.

When Sam had thus flaunted his incense before the face of Joss, and bowed his forehead to the sacred mat, and backed away, and turned and burned his devils without so much as a fragment of any one of them getting away, then he went straight to the corner of the room, where there was a door. He knew now that Joss would smile upon him. The old priest unlocked the door that opened into the Closet of Mystery. Sam selected a slender, keen-edged knife and a stouter stiletto from what was therein displayed, and hid them in his blouse. Then he slipped out into the street and lost himself once more in the night.

But it was no longer Sam Wren the mission proselyte, trembling for his life, no longer Sam Wren, the timid Chinese cook; it was Sam Wren of the Sam Yups, with a knife in his hand and the smile of Joss in his heart. Save for the halo of an occasional street lamp the night was pitch black. Sam slipped from doorway to doorway, shadow to shadow, street to street, and there was no one to see him. He was part of the night. Now he entered a narrow areaway. He crept along the ground. He flattened himself against a fence. Cautiously, swiftly, surely, he made his way through back yards and around obstructions, approaching the mission nearer and nearer.

At half-past-three o'clock, Sam Wren the Sam Yup man, pressed his body through a hole in a fence and crouched in the blind alleyway that sheltered his enemies. He must be very careful now. He knew that one of the Suey Sings still held guard before the mission. He knew that the hatchet-boys were patient fellows, and never slept. Perhaps it was Ah Fat who was watching; perhaps it was one of the others. Whichever it was he was not asleep. The Suey Sings never slept when they were on a spoor.

Very softly and stealthily the Sam Yup man stole forward. Joss had lent him an invisible cloak, and feet that make no noise. Nearer, nearer, nearer, he drew. He crawled on his hands and knees in the black angle where the fence met the ground. The Suey Sing man ought to be very near. There was no telling. It was too black to see.

One foot, two feet more. It was blacker than black ahead. Another advance, slowly, slowly, nearer, nearer, nearer. The blackness took form. There was something—something—in the alleyway. Very softly the Sam Yup man arose. He bent forward. The black body was an ashbarrel; but against it, with his face turned in the other direction, the Suey Sing hatchet-boy was leaning. Sam Wren stole forward. He moved an inch in a week. He placed his hand upon the ashbarrel. He leaned over it, forward, forward, forward. He raised his firm right hand very carefully, very patiently. With a swift stroke he drew it across the shadow, close under the chin. The Suey Sing man fell in a heap, gurgled a little and lay very still. The Sam Yup man wiped his knife on the Suey Sing man's blouse.

When the Suey Sing man had quit kicking, the Sam Yup man took him by the heels and dragged him behind the ashbarrel. Then he took up his position where the other had stood, and waited. He knew that the others would be along before daylight. He knew that they were expecting Sam Wren the stupid cook, to leave the mission at an early hour. The white man who employed him had to have his breakfast. No doubt his stupid cook never dreamed that the Suey Sing boys would wait for him all night.

Sam Wren waited, and waited, and the night grew blacker as it grew older. It was time the Suey Sings were at their post. At four fifteen he heard someone coming up the street. The Sam Yup man never moved a muscle. The footsteps drew nearer. They were at the head of the alley. The Sam Yup man did not seem to notice them. They passed on up the street. The Sam Yup man could tell a Chinaman's wooden footsteps as far as he could hear them. It was probably a

printer on one of the morning papers.

Now there was another sound of footsteps in the street. Another printer had finished his work and was going home. The footsteps approached the head of the alleyway, and then they stopped for a moment. They began again. A muffled black figure entered the fatal court. Not a word was spoken. Not a word of greeting passed between the watcher of the night and his brother Suey Sing who came to reinforce him at the appointed hour. The black shape drew quite close to the ash-barrel. The next moment the newcomer fell like a log, with a stiletto through his heart. Beautiful work! Ah Fat himself couldn't have done it cleaner.

The Sam Yup man let Luy Kam lie where he fell, for he had Ah Fat still to reckon with and Ah Fat was not the man to walk up and let a friend run a stiletto between his ribs, that was sure. Ah Fat was the keenest of the lot. No doubt he would have a good deal to say about the disposition to be made of knives and stilettos in his neighborhood.

It was still very dark. Now and then someone passed in the street; now and then in the distance could be heard the rumble of milk wagons and produce carts. There were people who never kept Sunday, it seemed.

The terrible leader of the Suey Sing hatchet-boys came sooner than was expected; that is to say, he came without the warning sound of shuffling wooden shoes, and without any signal whistle. For the rest, when his gaunt shape loomed up before Sam Wren, the Sam Yup man was ready for him.

"Huh! I smell blood!" said Ah Fat, in his thick Canton-Chinese.

"He bled like a hog!" replied Sam coldly, in the same dialect, speaking as few words as possible.

Ah Fat betrayed neither emotion nor surprise. He kicked the body with his foot. Then he fished out a match, and leaned over the corpse, lighting the match upon his shoe.

"You got to be damn sure," he said, as he held the flame over the dead face.

Sam Wren was standing behind him, and when the other bent over the dead man, Sam seized his Suey Sing pigtail firmly in one hand, jerked his head back sharply, and slit his throat from jowl to jowl. The blood spurted forth upon the ground. Ah Fat lurched forward in his rage, fumbling at his pocket. Then he tried to rise, but his knees weakened and would not support him. Sam Wren plunged his knife into his back, where the heart ought to be. Ah Fat tumbled over on his face. His hands twitched a little, his legs kicked a little, the horror at his throat gurgled a little, and then he went to join the ancestors of his tong. And that was the end of the terrible three.

The Sam Yup man felt of each to make sure that he was dead before he left them. The blood flowed once more through his veins. He was contented in his heart. He wanted to dance. He wanted to cry aloud. He felt gloriously exultant. But he did not dance, nor sing, nor cry aloud. It was beginning to grow gray in the east, and it would soon be breakfast time. Sam Wren the Sam Yup man wiped the blood from his hands on the clothing of the dead Chinamen, and the soles of his shoes also, where he had stepped in the crimson puddle. Then Sam Wren the cook went home and got breakfast.

In the morning, after he had finished up his work, Sam went to the Chinese church. In the afternoon Sam went to Sunday School and taught a class of China boys. In the evening Sam went out for the mission. Although he walked through the heart of Chinatown, no red paper devils fluttered to his feet, and he never once looked back over his shoulder to see if he was followed. He did not cross the street when he came to the black alleyway, but went boldly past. And he did not squeal when he climbed the mission steps. He had his Chinese Bible with him. Perhaps that was the reason. Or perhaps it was the Sunday School. Or perhaps it was the sermon of the morning.

The Monday papers contained an account of a mysterious highbinder murder, in which three innocent Chinamen had been slain near the Chinese mission. As usual, there was no clue to the murderers.

(*Continued from page 2*)

tional values, but deftly hints and leaves the solution to the very end. It is another story rich in substance; but the treatment is impressionistic rather than realistic, and to that may be attributed its failure to attain distinction itself as a "piece of art." It does not fall far short, for its faults cannot destroy the bigness of the conception—that the two men responsible for the engineering triumph should "hold up" the two ends of the bridge.

You remember how O. Henry wove romance about dandelion and egg salads or such remote foodstuffs as the potato and the onion? Mr. Evans has woven his tapestry around a fly and a daddy-long-legs with equally charming results, albeit he makes the long arm of coincidence pretty lame in the process. Of course *Fate's Teetotums* is a fairy tale; the cloth is so flimsy that one can see the holes in the warp. One might say that the sense of the inner unity of things which one may get from—say Carlyle—is here distorted by a thin and mawkish travesty of an allegory of fate; or, in other words, that the sense of the unity of things, etc., is here reduced to a lot of sentimental slush covering a groundwork of petty, insipid fatalism. After saying that, one might as well return to the original proposition and repeat that the author has succeeded fairly well in his attempt to microscope a daddy-long-legs and a *musca domestica* into plot proportions. He may at least be commended for that.

The Chink is an old plot warmed over and garnished with new scenery, new players and even a new asbestos curtain to rise into the proscenium arch. What of it? It grips the sympathy just as it did when De Maupassant made use of it in "The Necklace." The author subtly conveys the illusive Chinese atmosphere. One senses the fidelity of the setting in such passages as that one which speaks of the "red coral buttons of a provincial governor," in that one which tells how "the far pagoda gongs throbbed through the dead air, and peace lay heavily upon the world," and again in the description of the Chinese games in the house of the "Ten Thousand Little Monkeys." The foreshadowed meeting between Lo Kiang and Foo Gan is a brief but deft study in contrasts; and the climax, which contains its own denouement, is structually good.

In the introduction of *Something for Nothing*, the reader is led to suppose that the story will have to do with the struggle between McGann and Duffy for the hand of the widow, Mrs. Kester. This proves misleading, as the reader learns in the end that McGann's use of the dog to finance a theatre party is the real story, inasmuch as he was already Exhibit A with Mrs. Kester. This story does entertain despite our arguments that such sophomoric view-points and plots do not enter into good short-story writing.

Alfred Westfall does fairly well in *An Honest Thief* what another author scored with repeatedly. The mock morality is pleasing and harmless, and the improbable conversation stretches along a highway of relatively unimportant incidents to a goal of debatable worthiness.

The five dollar prize winners in the fourth contest were Miss Gertrude E. Simms, Chicago, Ills.; Willis K. Jones, Clinton, N. Y.; Russell P. Askue, Cleveland, O.; Willis W. Hackmann, Bridgeport, Conn.; Francis J. Gillooly, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Seventh Contest comprises the stories in this issue, (June); and all lists must be received at the office of THE BLACK CAT, Salem, Mass., before July 1st. Prizes will be awarded July 10th; and the result of the contest will be announced in the September BLACK CAT, issued August 15th.

A PRIZE OF $25 will be awarded to the author of the story which is selected as the best story of the month by the largest number of club members.

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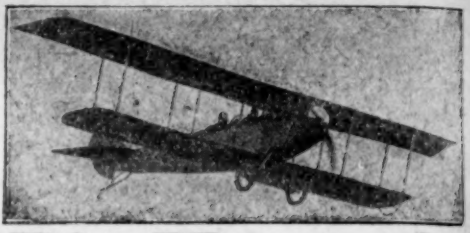

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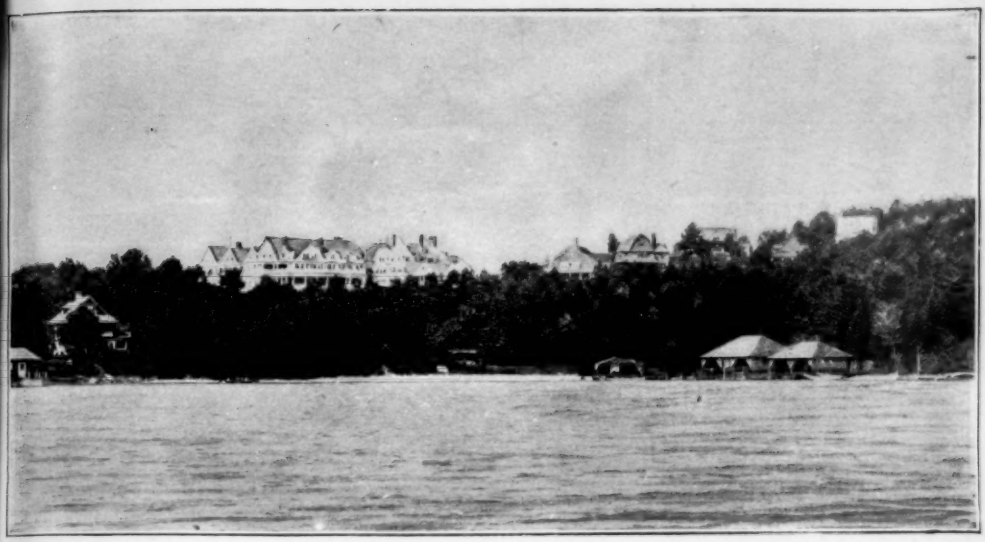

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